

OPINION 6

THE BLAME DOESN'T
LIE ONLY WITH PUTIN

WORLD 8

BIDEN, PUTIN SIGNAL BIGGER
CONFRONTATION AHEAD OVER UKRAINE

MONEY 9

INDIA RATINGS PEGS FY22 GDP
GROWTH AT 8.6 % ON DATA REVISION

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WT20 AUDITION
CONTINUES
WITH SL SERIES
12 SPORTUkraine crisis escalates;
sanctions regime beginsUK rapped for mild
sanctions; Ukraine
allows citizens to
use arms in defence

AP ■ BRUSSELS/LONDON/KYIV

European Union sanctions against Russia have come into effect. They are the first steps in a planned series of retaliatory measures devised to be cranked up if Russian President Vladimir Putin orders an attack or pushes his troops deeper into Ukraine.

The sanctions that took effect on Wednesday targeted senior Russian Government officials, several companies and hundreds of lawmakers who voted in favour of recognising the independence of separatist parts of Ukraine.

The sanctions are mostly a freeze on the assets of those listed and a ban on them travelling in the 27-nation EU. The measures come on top of a slew of economic and other sanctions slapped on Russia since it annexed Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula in 2014.

Those sanctions already targeted Russia's financial, energy and defence sectors, as well as goods that can be used for

both civilian and military purposes.

However, Britain promised to hit Russia with "powerful" sanctions over its military confrontation with Ukraine. But the slim sheaf of measures announced by Prime Minister Boris Johnson has disappointed allies and critics alike.

The UK has slapped asset freezes and travel bans on three wealthy Russians and sanctioned five Russian banks in response to President Vladimir Putin's decision to recognise two breakaway regions of eastern Ukraine. Johnson says there will be more to come if there is a "full-scale" Russian invasion. But many say the current measures are too little, and further sanctions will come too late.

Russia began evacuating its embassy in Kyiv, and Ukraine urged its citizens to leave Russia on Wednesday as the region braced for further confrontation after President Vladimir Putin received authorisation to use military force outside his country and the West responded with sanctions.

Ukraine's parliament has also voted to approve a draft law that gives permission to Ukrainians to carry firearms and act in self-defence.

Continued on Page 2



Commuters wait for a local train at a subway station in Kyiv, Ukraine, on Wednesday. Ukraine urged its citizens to leave Russia as Europe braced for further confrontation on Wednesday

AP

Russia hails India's
balanced approach

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Underlining the long-standing and "time-tested" ties with India, Russia on Wednesday appreciated India's "independent position" on the Ukraine crisis and "balanced" approach to world affairs.

These remarks by Russian Deputy Chief of Mission

Roman Babushkin here came against the backdrop of India enunciating its position in the emergency session of the UN Security Council on Tuesday.

The Russian diplomat said the Indian position was reflective of the special and privileged strategic partnership between the two countries.

Continued on Page 2

Nawab Malik arrested
for money launderingNCP terms move
misuse of power
by Centre, ED

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In a major development that sparked instant protests from the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) which termed the move as "misuse of power" by the Centre, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Wednesday arrested Maharashtra Minister for



Minority Affairs and NCP leader Nawab Malik for his alleged involvement in a money laundering case.

Malik, who is the second Maharashtra Minister after Anil Deshmukh (the then State Home Minister who was arrest-

ed on November 2, 2021 in a money laundering case) to have come under its scanner within the last four months, was placed under formal arrest by the ED officials after eight-long hours of intense questioning in connection with the purchase of a huge plot of land at "a throwaway price" from two henchmen of Karachi-based Dawood Ibrahim.

Malik was picked up from his house at 6 am by the ED officials and taken to their office for questioning

Continued on Page 2

Rename Gangubai,
SC asks Bhansali

NEW DELHI ■ PNS

The Supreme Court on Wednesday suggested the makers of the Bollywood movie Gangubai Kathiawadi to consider changing the name of the film in view of the pendency of several cases against the Alia Bhatt-starrer movie.

Produced by Sanjay Leela Bhansali's Bhansali Production Private Ltd, the film is scheduled for release this Friday.

A bench of Justices Indira Banerjee and J K Maheswari suggested the name change to the respondents which included the production house.

Continued on Page 2

60% turnout in UP; BJP, SP
claim they've crossed 200VIRENDRA NATH BHATT ■
LUCKNOW

In the fourth phase of elections of the Uttar Pradesh Assembly, a moderate 59.77 per cent turnout was recorded on Wednesday. During the 2017 UP Assembly polls, the voter turnout was 62.55 per cent in the fourth phase.

Soon after voting, Deputy CM Dinesh Sharma said, "After the fourth phase, the BJP will hit a double century and will march ahead to break its previous records."

The Samajwadi Party made similar claims.

Polling was held in 59 constituencies in nine districts, including capital Lucknow.

Union Minister of State Home Ajay Mishra Teni cast his vote amid tight security at Banbirpur polling booth at Lakhimpur Kheri.

UP's Chief Electoral Officer Ajay Kumar Shukla said till 5 pm 57.45 per cent voter turnout was recorded and the final figure of voting was being compiled.

Continued on Page 2

Mayawati thanks Shah
for recognising good
performance of BSP

Lucknow: BSP leader Mayawati on Wednesday appreciated Union Minister Amit Shah for acknowledging that her party will get Dalit votes but added that Muslims and other communities are also voting for the BSP.

Detailed report P2

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Har Pal Aapke Saath

LCR/6/2021-22/48/ENG

HC seeks info on Campus Front's role in hijab row

Bengaluru: The Karnataka High Court, hearing the hijab case, on Wednesday sought to know from the State Government the role of the Campus Front of India (CFI). On January one, six girl students of a college in Udipi attended a press conference held by the CFI in the coastal town protesting against the college authorities denying them entry into classrooms wearing hijab. This was four days after they requested the principal permission to wear hijab in classes which was not allowed. Till then, students used to wear the headscarf to the campus, but entered the classroom after removing it, college principal Rudre Gowda had said. "The institution did not have any rule on hijab-wearing since no one used to wear it to the classroom in the last 35 years. The students who came with the demand had the backing of outside forces," Gowda had said.

Senior counsel S S Naganand, representing the Government PU College for Girls, its principal and a teacher, on Wednesday told the full bench, comprising Chief Justice Ritu Raj Awasthi, Justice J M Khazi and Justice Krishna S Dixit, that the hijab row was started by some students owing allegiance to CFI. To this, the Chief Justice sought to know what the CFI stood for and what its role was. The senior counsel said the organisation was coordinating and organising protests in the state. "It is also a voluntary organisation, which is spear-heading and drumbeating in favour of students (demanding wearing of hijab in classrooms)". Another lawyer said the CFI is a radical organisation, which is not recognised by the colleges. Then Chief Justice Awasthi sought to know whether the state was aware of it, to which Naganand said the Intelligence

Gadkari to lay foundation stone of Delhi-Jaipur expressway projects

Gurugram: Union Minister for road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari will lay the foundation stone of projects worth about ₹1,000 crore on the Delhi-Jaipur National Highway on March 8, according to a statement of the district administration. In these projects ₹23 crore will be spent to built Bhaspur Chowk flyover, Manesar elevated flyover for ₹81 crore and Bawal Chowk flyover for ₹23 crore. Apart from this, the flyover at Kapriwas Chowk in Rewari has also been included in this project. Officials said a tender worth ₹459 crore for the repair of the Delhi-Jaipur Expressway and service lane is also involved in this project. Along with this, flyovers and underpasses to be built in the part of Rajasthan have also been included in this project. According to the officials, after the completion of these projects, the traffic pressure on Delhi-Jaipur National Highway will be reduced and the traffic management will be improved. After the lay foundation event, Gadkari would also address the public meeting.

Mayawati: Shah's 'greatness' he accepted BSP's relevance

Lucknow: Bahujan Samaj Party leader Mayawati on Wednesday appreciated Union Minister Amit Shah for acknowledging that her party will get Dalit votes but added that Muslims and other communities are also voting for the BSP. Shah had recently said in a television interview that Mayawati remained relevant in Uttar Pradesh, where the fourth round of polling for the Assembly took place on Wednesday. "The BSP has maintained its relevance. I believe it will get votes. I don't know how much of it will convert into seats but it will get votes," he had said. The senior BJP leader's remark triggered some speculation over the possibility of a post-election tie-up between the two parties. In 1995, 1997 and 2002, Mayawati was sworn in as CM with BJP's support. Commenting on the minister's remark, Mayawati said it was his "greatness" that he

accepted the truth. But she added that her BSP is getting votes of not only Dalits, but Muslims, Other Backward Classes and upper castes as well. "When the results are declared on March 10, the BSP will form its government like it did in 2007 with full majority," Mayawati told reporters after casting her vote. Asked about Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav's claim that his party is getting the Muslim voters' support, she said the ground reality cannot be more different and can be known by visiting villages. "Members of religious minorities, the Muslims, have been unhappy with the Samajwadi Party's working style. They believe that even when they were with it for the last five years, they were sidelined to make space for others at the time of giving tickets," the Dalit leader said. She also dismissed Yadav's claim of making forays into her core Jatav vote bank, calling the idea a distant dream and advised the SP leader to make sure that he gets the votes of his own caste first. She termed the former chief minister "nakli Ambedkarvadi" (fake Ambedkarite), saying he had changed the names of districts and schemes she had named after Dalit icons during her government. "The Samajwadi Party is dreaming of forming the government and this dream will be shattered. You all know whenever SP has been in power, Dalits, backwards, the poor and Brahmins have been harassed the most," she said. "People here have seen how the 'goonda' and mafia elements called the shots and harassment was at its peak whenever the SP was in power," she said. Under the SP government the state also witnessed riots, she said, citing the Muzaffarnagar violence. **PTI**

Special CBI court sentences ex-BOI manager to RI for defrauding bank

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI A Special CBI court here on Wednesday sentenced former Manager of Bank of India, Jacob Circle Branch, Mumbai, and three private persons to rigorous imprisonment for periods ranging from three to five years and imposed varied amounts of fines on them for allegedly defrauding the bank to the tune of Rs 98.28 lakh. While Abid Ali Gulam Vohra, then Manager, Bank of India, Jacob Circle Branch, Mumbai was sentenced to four years Rigorous Imprisonment with fine of Rs. 3.5 lakh, one Ashok Leharchand Bhansali (private person) was handed out five years of RI with fine of Rs. 3.35 crore. Two other private persons -- Sadiq Sayyad Mir Patel and Rizwan Sayyad Sadiq Patel -- were sentenced to three years of rigorous imprisonment each and imposed fines of Rs.32.5 lakh and Rs.1.5 lakh respectively in the bank fraud case. The CBI had registered a case on 30.05.1998 against four accused including Manager, Bank of India, Jacob Circle Branch, Mumbai; private persons and others on complaint from Bank of India on the allegations of causing loss to the tune of Rs. 98.28 lakh (approx.) to Bank. The CBI's contention was that the accused opened several accounts in the bank. Cheques were deposited in these accounts and the same were sent in clearing. In the normal course, the customer was permitted to draw the amount only after cheques so presented were cleared. But in the instant case, the branch was permitted drawing against uncleared effects immediately and thereafter the instruments were sent in clearing. According to the CBI, Cheques deposited in these accounts were purely of accommodative nature as invariably all these cheques were returned unpaid by the drawee bank. The branch was expected to debit the account when the cheques were returned. To make provisions for posting of returned cheques, said customers deposited further cheques which again were sent in clearing.

Russia hails India's balanced...

From Page 1 The diplomat added India has been playing a vital role as a responsible global power and it takes an "independent and balanced" approach to global affairs. "We welcome the independent position of India which it took twice at the UN Security Council," he said at an online media briefing. "The Indian activities at the UN Security Council are fully reflecting the merit of our special and privileged strategic partnership," he added. Amid escalating tension between Moscow and the West after Russian President Vladimir Putin recognised two breakaway Ukrainian regions as independent States, India at the meeting of the UN Security Council called for "restraint on all sides". It stressed that the immediate priority is "de-escalation of tensions" taking into account the legitimate security interests of all countries and aimed towards securing long-term peace and stability in the region and beyond. "Russian India partnership is based on a strong and solid foundation. It is based on mutual trust," Babushkin said. "Our cooperation does not represent any threat to anyone and at the same time we keep moving shoulder-to-shoulder to establish a just and equal multi-polar world," he added, hoping that the intensity of India-Russia ties will continue at the same level. He also claimed the Western powers are trying to destabilise the region and said sanctions against Russia would result in instability to the global economy as it will lead to an atmosphere of distrust. Minister of State for External Affairs Meenakshi Lekhi, meanwhile, said India believes in rule-based order and all stakeholders must communicate with each other. "India believes in rule-based order. We pray for harmony and peace all around. We seek all the stakeholders must communicate with each other," she told a news agency here. The Government was doing its best regarding the evacuation of its citizens including students from Ukraine as in the past like "Be it the Covid-19 situation, emergency in Libya or other exigencies. India stands by its people. We urge the citizens to remain in touch with the Embassy," she said. There are more than 20,000 Indian students studying in various universities in Ukraine and the Indian Embassy on Tuesday asked them to leave the country as soon as possible. They were also informed the Embassy was arranging special flights.

60% turnout in UP; BJP, SP claim they've crossed...

From Page 1 The highest turnout of 62.42 per cent was recorded in Lakhimpur while the turnout till 5 pm at Lucknow was 54.98 per cent. The districts which voted on Wednesday are Pilibhit, Lakhimpur Kheri, Sitapur, Hardoi, Unnao, Lucknow, Rae Bareilly, Banda, and Fatehpur and fate of 624 candidates, including several Cabinet Ministers, as well as Unnao rape victim's mother Asha Singh will be sealed in this round of polling. As many as 800 companies of paramilitary forces and over 60,000 policemen were deployed for security at 13,813 polling stations and 24,580 polling booths in 208 police station areas. Defence Minister and BJP leader Rajnath Singh cast his vote at a polling booth in Lucknow. After casting his vote he said, "The BJP will not only repeat the history but it is also an undeniable possibility that our number of seats will increase." BJP leader Sudhanshu Trivedi MP casts his vote at the Sherwood Academy polling booth in Lucknow. Uttar Pradesh is witnessing a multi-cornered contest with Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Samajwadi Party (SP)-Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) alliance, and the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) and Congress as principal contenders. Uttar Pradesh Law Minister Brajesh Pathak, who is facing Samajwadi Party candidate and two-time Corporator Surendra Singh Gandhi in the Lucknow Cantonment seat, are among the prominent contender in this phase. In the high-profile Raebareilly Sadar -- part of Congress chief Sonia Gandhi's parliamentary seat -- sitting party MLA Aditi Singh (BJP) is facing Congress's Manish Chauhan. Aditi is the daughter of the constituency's five-time MLA, the late Akhilesh Singh. The Samajwadi Party has fielded RP Yadav. Voting was disrupted for two hours Kadipur Sani area of Lakhimpur Kheri at booth number 109 of Kadipur Sani after adhesive was thrown at the Electronic Voting Machine (EVM). The voting resumed after the EVM was replaced. The police have registered an FIR against the unidentified accused. The voters expressed their anger over the interruption in the voting process. According to the voters, they waited for casting their vote for two hours due to the interruption. Voting for the remaining three phases of the seven-phase UP elections will take place on February 27, March 3, and 7.

Covid-19 cases witness marginal spike in Maha

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI February 16 and 22 remained static at 0.02 per cent. As 2,594 Covid-19 patients were discharged from the hospitals across the state after full recovery, the total number of people discharged from the hospitals since the second week of March 2020 increased from 76,99,623 to 77,02,217. The recovery rate in the state rose from 97.96 per cent to 97.97 per cent. The number of "active cases" in the state dropped from 13,070 to 11,604. The fatality rate in the state stood static at 1.82 per cent. The active cases in Pune dropped from 4,169 to 3874. The active cases in Mumbai dropped from 1314 to 1228, while the number of active cases in the neighbouring Thane dropped from 914 to 858. The active cases in Ahmednagar dropped from 1,132 to 976, while the number

Rename Gangubai, SC asks...

From Page 1 "List on February 24, on top of the Board," the bench ordered while deciding to hear the plea of Babuji Rawji Shah, who claims to be the adoptive son of Gangubai, against the Bombay High Court's order declining him various reliefs such as interim stay on the release of the movie. Shah had earlier moved the high court seeking an order restraining the writers/publishers of the novel from creating any third-party rights or writing any other story on the life of his mother (Gangubai Kathiawadi).

Nawab Malik...

From Page 1 "I have reason to believe that Malik has been found to be guilty of an offence punishable under the provisions of PMLA," Assistant Director of ED Niraj Kumar stated in the arrest order. Sixty-two-year-old Malik --- who hit national news headlines after he came out with a series of revelations about former director of Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) Sameer Wankhede in recent months in the wake of the arrest of Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan's son Aryan and others in connection with the mid-sea drug bust case - remained unnerved by his arrest by the ED. "We will fight, win and expose all," the NCP Minister said. Later, Malik told a special court designated to hear cases under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), "The ED officials came to my house early in the morning, took me to the ED office where they detained me and later, recorded my statement. At the ED office, the officials gave me a summons copy at the ED office and asked me to sign it." The ruling NCP and its two allies Shiv Sena and Congress in the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) Government in the State came to the

staunch defence of Malik. Within hours after Malik's arrest, NCP chief Sharad Pawar - who is considered the architect of the MVA Government -- confabulated with his senior party colleagues at his south Mumbai residence "Silver Oak" and later met Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray at the latter's official residence "Varsha" at Malabar Hill and discussed the strategy to deal with the situation arising out of Malik's arrest. Talking to media persons later in the evening, senior NCP Minister Chhagan Bhujbal said following the arrest, Malik would not resign from the State Cabinet. "The ED has arrested on flimsy grounds. Without any proof, the ED is trying to link Malik to the accused in the 1993 Mumbai serial blasts. At no point in time, Malik's name ever figured in the blasts case. Here was a Minister who was fearlessly exposing the misdeeds of the Narcotics Control Bureau, its director and the BJP. What the ED has done is an act of vendetta. We will fight Malik's arrest both legally and on streets," Bhujbal said. Bhujbal said the leaders of the MVA constituents - comprising Shiv Sena, NCP and Congress - will stage a dharna at the Gandhi statue near Mantralaya (State Secretariat) in south Mumbai on Thursday morning in protest against the "misuse" of investigating agencies by the Centre against its political rivals. "Thereafter, we will organise protests against Malik's arrest in vari-

ous parts of the state," he said. Coming down heavily on the ED for arresting a Minister without serving a notice to him, State NCP president and senior Minister Jayant Patil said, "The arrest is nothing but sheer misuse of power. The ED officials visit him early in the morning, pick him up and take him to their office where they arrest him some hours later. The ED had not served any notice to Malik. This is how the ED is treating a responsible minister in the State government. This goes against the letter and spirit of the Centre-state relations." While it is not formally confirmed by the ED as to nature of the offences for which he had been booked, official sources said Malik was reportedly questioned by the ED in connection with the allegations that he and his family had purchased 2.80 acre plot of land from the "front man" of Dawood's sister Haseena Parker -- Mohammad Salim Patel -- and 1993 blasts accused and Badshah Khan at a throw away price in 2005. It may be recalled that in the second week of November last year, senior BJP leader and Leader of Opposition in the State Assembly Devendra Fadnis, had sought to link him to the underworld by alleging that he and his family had purchased a huge plot of land at "a throw-away price" from two henchmen of K a r a c h i - b a s e d Dawood.

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15621 Kamakhya Jn.-Anand Vihar Terminal Express	24.02.2022
15622 Anand Vihar Terminal-Kamakhya Jn. Express	25.02.2022
19616 Kamakhya Jn.-Udaipur Express	24.02.2022
19615 Udaipur-Kamakhya Jn. Express	28.02.2022
14619 Agartala-Firozpur Cantt. Express	24.02.2022
14620 Firozpur Cantt.-Agartala Express	28.02.2022
14038 New Delhi-Silchar Express	24.02.2022
14037 Silchar-New Delhi Express	28.02.2022
19305 Dr. Ambedkar Nagar-Kamakhya Express	24.02.2022
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Delhi Govt all set to revamp its websites

The aim is to provide a one-stop solution to all Government-related information and departmental services: Kailash Gahlot

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

With the aim to provide a one-stop solution to all Government-related information and services offered by its departments, the Delhi Government is planning to revamp its websites.

The sites will have all new features and will be faster, dynamic and more user-friendly. Officials said that the new websites will also be compatible with all types of devices, including desktops, tablets and smartphones.

In a review meeting convened by Delhi's Information Technology Minister Kailash Gahlot on Wednesday, the new vendors presented their proposal for the revamped design along with all new features that the Government sites would be hosting.

"The development of the new website is being done by taking into account various feedback received from its users through the existing sites and social media channels. The current interface occasionally shows errors and the server crashes when there is a heavy influx, especially in the event where a new scheme is being launched," said an official.

"The new website will also see more interactive features like IoT (Internet of Things) and chatbot integration,



enhanced security features for in-house and external links, better and advanced search options, visitor's grievances and suggestions portals.

Social media integration with all relevant handles will ensure that all policies, announcements, press publications, reports with partner organisations are available for public access," said the official.

Last year, the IT department had floated a tender for design, development, host, operation and maintenance of Delhi State Portal and associated websites of the Delhi Government.

"The new vendors have already started work on the same. The templates and design has been finalised and the first phase of launch of revamped websites is expected to go live by April.

The remaining department websites are expected to be completed in phases and will be live in a few months," said the official. "Delhi Government, under the lead-

ership of our Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has changed public service delivery in the Capital and with many of our departments going faceless, there is need for a user-friendly website. Government websites are considered to be outdated and difficult to manoeuvre and we are about to change that," said Gahlot.

"These websites are being designed with state-of-the-art, more robust, secure and faster systems which will enable the system to switch automatically to a secondary hosting server in case of high traffic to ensure a smooth experience to all users.

Linking the websites to our social media and communication channels will not just make it more interactive for the user but also increase transparency and accountability in the way the Government functions.

We are also trying to incorporate features that will aid the differently-abled through voice support, soon," Gahlot added.

5K city parks to get D-STPs

Use of treated water in Delhi gardens will reduce dependency on groundwater

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

To treat sewage water locally and use it for gardening purposes, the Delhi Government will construct Decentralised-Sewage Treatment Plant (STPs) in 5,000 parks of the national Capital. Water Minister and Delhi Jal Board (DJB) Chairman, Satyendar Kumar Jain visited an under construction D-STP in a park in Model Town and inspected the ongoing work. He instructed officials to make use of the existing space of the park. The treated water will act as fertiliser for plants.

Jain said, "The D-STP must be aesthetically pleasing and landscaping should be part of the system. This will be a huge step towards creating a natural ecosystem and to help the flora and fauna to grow in the area. A proper mechanism should be placed to ensure public convenience is not compromised."

Currently, the Government is building D-STPs at five major locations of Delhi, i.e. Sheikh Sarai-I, Sheikh Sarai- II, Sandesh Vihar, Ashok Vihar, and Model Town. These D-STPs can be considered as a sustainable and cost-effective alternative for the treatment of wastewater.

"In these 5,000 parks of Delhi, the old method of irrigation will be changed. The

new D-STPs will provide the solution to this water contamination problem. The recycled water, after the treatment, could be easily reused for the irrigation practices in the parks which will save precious groundwater and will not need any additional pipeline to supply," a Government official said. Apart from this, D-STPs will save the amount of funds being spent on the procurement of fertiliser because the treated water will have all the essential nutrients and thus no additional fertiliser will be required, he said.

Currently, the water that is needed for gardening is extracted from tube wells that could otherwise be used for drinking water purposes. By constructing the D-STPs, the treated water will be used for gardening purposes and dependency on groundwater will be reduced. Hence, the groundwater levels that are gradually decreasing will be conserved.

D-STP is a mechanism of placing wastewater treatment at the site of origin of wastewater. The official said that currently STPs are installed at distant geographical locations of the city and water is collected from different sources and treated for further use by laying an expensive conveyance system.

"This will not only resolve the complex problem of sewage transportation but will also help rejuvenate the local water bodies and increase groundwater levels by allowing the treated water to flow into them. D-STPs are sustainable alternatives to large treatment plants that require miles of costly supply, effort and delivery of infrastructure," he said.

AAP gears up for MCD polls

Booth Samvaad, MCD Badlaav Yatra to begin from today

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

With the municipal elections round the corner, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) has announced the start of 'Booth Samvaad' and 'MCD Badlaav Yatra' campaigns from Thursday to expand its reach to every household of the national Capital.

AAP Delhi Convenor and Cabinet Minister Gopal Rai along with senior leader and Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) in-charge Durgesh Pathak announced that the party leaders will hold dialogue with the people of Delhi at 13,000 booths through the 'Booth Samvaad' campaign from February 24 to March 10.

According to Rai, all of AAP's top brass, MLAs and party workers will take out massive 'MCD Badlaav Yatras' in all 70 constituencies of Delhi on 12th and 13th March.

"Booth Samvaad campaign will involve all old and new party members who will help chalk out a plan for throwing the BJP out of power and bringing change in the MCD. A 20 member committee will be formed at each booth to accomplish the 'Booth Vijay' initiative.

At the same time, Durgesh Pathak stated, "No matter where you come from, the moment you enter Delhi all you see is mountains of garbage left behind by the BJP-ruled MCD. Almost 99 per cent of

Delhiites want to bring a revolutionary change in the MCD; the Kejriwal Model will soon bring MCD back on track. "The BJP has been in power for the last 15 years in the MCD. Their rule has been punctuated by all sorts of corruption, misgovernance and agony imposed on innocent residents.

The AAP has taken a resolve to bring a revolutionary change and provide relief to the whole of Delhi by ending the tyranny of the BJP. In this vein, we had earlier kicked off the MCD Badlaav Campaign. Under this campaign, about 20 lakh new members joined the AAP. We had issued a missed-call number for this purpose along with a door-to-door campaign," said Rai.

"All of these new and old members of the AAP, as well as all of those who wish to actively campaign for change in MCD, will begin the dialogue at party booths throughout Delhi's 13,000 booths," said Rai.

Hitting hard at the BJP, Pathak said that since the last Assembly election, the AAP has continuously exposed scam after scam in the BJP's 15 year long rule of the MCD.

"We took out door to door campaigns and about 2,500 mandal sabhas as well as a robust membership campaign. Under our campaign we went to the public to ask whether they want change and want to get rid of the BJP's garbage mountains in Delhi.

We all know how Delhi was once known because of Qutub Minar and Red Fort but today MCD's landfills overshadow every monument and bring shame to Delhi," said Pathak.

Meet on security of G'gram housing complexes held

PARVESH SHARMA ■ GURUGRAM

After chairing a meeting with officials regarding the security of housing complexes of Gurugram, Union Minister, Rao Inderjeet Singh on Wednesday said that the Chintels Paradiso incident has increased the distrust in builders and the Haryana Development and Regulation of Urban Areas Act, 1975 will be amended.

On February 10, at least two persons were killed in Gurugram after a portion of the sixth floor of an apartment collapsed.

The Minister said if necessary steps are not put in place then the interest of builders and buyers in Gurugram could be hurt.

He said at present a structural engineer appointed by the builders provides a structural audit certificate and on this, the District Town and Country Planning Department (DTCP) has to issue the relevant permission to develop a housing society.

"To avoid such incidents in future the law will be amended and the Government needs to prepare a mechanism so that apart from the structural engineers appointed by the builders, the DTCP will also conduct a structural audit through reputed Government institutions or structural engineers empanelled by them before giving the occupation certificate," he said.

The Minister also informed that a meeting in this regard has already taken place between the Government and department officials to avoid such incidents in future.

Panel to investigate financial irregularity in accounts of DU's College of Vocational Studies

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A two-member committee headed by a retired high court judge has been constituted to investigate the alleged financial discrepancies in all accounts of the Delhi University's College of Vocational Studies, officials said on Wednesday.

The decision was taken during a meeting of the college's governing body on Wednesday. The enquiry committee will be headed by Justice (retired) Sunil Gaur.

During the meeting, an audit report into the alleged financial irregularities by the college administration between 2010 and 2013 was presented to governing body, headed by Chairman Rajan Chopra.

The audit report highlighted many "irregularities in operational processes, documentation, compliance and internal controls that expose the college to a very high level of financial risk", as per the minutes of the meeting.

"Financial discrepancies in several accounts were reported. The governing body discussed recommendations made by auditor and accepted part of 1 report," the minutes read.

It was noted that several documents were not made available to the auditor by the accounts, admin, the librarian and the coordinator of the IGNOU Centre running from the college. The audit was ordered by the governing body last November to investigate

the alleged corruption in all the accounts of the college. The audit was initiated after irregularities in the purchase of library books surfaced, the officials said.

Principal Inderjeet Dagar had been accused of financial irregularities when 180 books purchased for a lakh didn't reach the college, officials said.

There have been complaints of financial and administrative irregularities against him, according to the officials. "The GB (governing body) decided to set up a two-member enquiry committee comprising Justice (Retd.) Sunil Gaur (Chairman) and CA Arun Vasistha as members to investigate the financial deficiencies in all the accounts (including IGNOU) of the college," the minutes read.

The governing body has also decided to extend the internal audit for another four years.

Last month, the DU administration accepted the report by retired Delhi High Court judge Justice S N Dhingra, which found irregularities in the purchase of library books for the college and asked principal Dagar to proceed on leave till further orders so that further inquiry could be conducted.

"The principal has misused his position and has been indulged in many irregularities including related to UGC exams," said Kumar Ashutosh, Secretary of CVS teachers' association.

BJP seals liquor shop near ayurvedic hosp at Haidarpur-Shalimar road

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Wednesday sealed a liquor shop functioning near Ayurvedic Hospital at Haidarpur-Shalimar road in the presence of party workers and locals.

Delhi BJP president Adesh Gupta said "We will not allow the Kejriwal's dictatorship to run these shops in residential areas, main markets, hospitals, schools and temples.

"Party leaders and workers will get all illegally opened liquor shops in capital sealed, including those near schools and temples. Hitting out at Delhi Government, he said that every person in national capital is



questioning Kejriwal government move of "distributing" liquor instead of ensuring clean water, building schools, hospitals and flyovers.

"The long queue near liquor shops is posing threat to residents and risking safety of women, youth and children. Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has tried to destabilize law and order situation in Delhi. Together with liquor mafia of Delhi, they are working to make Delhi a liquor city," he added.

Min conducts surprise inspection of Govt's child protection home

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Women and Child Development Minister Rajendra Pal Gautam conducted a surprise inspection of government's child protection home and correctional home on Wednesday and directed officials to remove all shortcomings to improve facilities for children. During the inspection, he also interacted with all children. The children shared their future plans with minister. The Minister encouraged the children to move ahead and fulfil their dreams and also become good citizens of society. Principal Secretary Sandeep Kumar was advised to ensure a continuous dialogue with children and staff in which minister himself and



IAS/administrative officers would be present. "This will help in establishing direct communication with children and raise their self-confidence and standard of living. It will also ensure that all problems in institution such as improvement, maintenance or providing any facilities etc can be resolved and addressed quickly," the statement issued by the office of Women and Child Development Minister. Gautam said "Our aim is that all ashrams of Delhi government should be world-class like its government schools."

Illegal private hosp busted in G'gram

STAFF REPORTER ■ GURUGRAM

A joint team of Haryana's Chief Minister Flying wing, district Drug Controller and Health Department on Tuesday busted an illegal private hospital being operated in Gurugram. Police said that they have booked a doctor and two others who were running hospital without requisite documents or license from district health department. The doctor has been identified as Dr Dharmender. His accomplices

who were nabbed are Bittu Yadav, the operator of hospital and Sonu. According to police, the culprits were allegedly running 14/15 beds hospital in name of Shri Balaji Hospital in a rented building in village Faliyas Market on Pachgaon-Taurau road Road. It is alleged that Yadav was running a private hospital and used to treat patients and even normal and cesarean deliveries were being conducted without female doctors and surgeons illegally. Based on reliable information a joint team of chief minister fly-

ing squad, district drug controller and health department conducted raid at illegal hospital and found Bittu Yadav, Sonu and 10 other nursing and cleaning staff on spot. "Sonu was failed to produce any degree. He informed the police that hospitalized patients are being treated by Dr Dharmender, Dr Dharmender was called to hospital for an enquiry, he said that he is working in Shri Balaji Hospital on a salary/sharing basis since August 21 but for last two months he is not coming to this

hospital and his name stamp is being misused on patients' files," said Inderjeet DSP, (CM flying squad). The raiding team have also recovered multiple fake medical certificates, medicines of expired date, 4 stamps of 2 doctors which were printed respectively on name of Dr Samit Bansal, Dr Dharmender and Dr Abhendra Shekhar and a stamp in name of Shri Balaji Hospital. The raiding team also sealed a large number of medicines which hospital operator could not provide any bills/documents about whose buy & sale.

DMRC launches renewed official website, mobile app

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In line with the Government of India's 'Digital India' initiative, the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) launched its revamped official website and mobile application with many advanced features such as interactive route maps, advanced station search options, real time first and last train time calculator, next and nearest station alert on the app etc. The new look official website as well as a state-of-the-art mobile application of DMRC was launched at Metro Bhawan for the greater convenience of passengers by Managing Director Dr Mangu Singh in the presence of other senior



officials. The website has been designed as a bilingual platform with all features being available both in Hindi and English. For the first time, DMRC has also integrated its website and the mobile application which will ensure faster updates and flow of information on both the platforms. "The passengers have been provided with the Interactive Map feature on the Website and Mobile App to plan their journey quickly and efficiently. Passengers using the Interactive Map are able to

view the complete route for their journey along with information of stations and interchanges on their selected route," the DMRC said in a statement. "It also has the provision for the passengers to view the complete details of each station in the DMRC network. The various details shown include station location on map, station details, gate details, lift/escalator availability with location, key nearby places and station facilities," it added. On the DMRC Mobile App, passengers using this feature while making their journey on Metro trains will be alerted prior to reaching their destination station via push notifications on their mobile phone, it said.

NDMC approves proposal for smart roads, sewer treatment plant in city

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) on Wednesday approved proposal for smart roads, sewer treatment plant and green energy in National Capital. According to a senior NDMC official, the redevelopment of roads into 'smart roads' will not only be aesthetically evolved, but also designed to ensure user-convenience and experience without compromising safety of the users. The roads which will be resurfaced include Tilak Marg, KG Marg, Dr Zakir Hussain Marg, Pandara Road, Tolstoy Marg, Hailey Road, Tansen Marg and Babar Road. The total cost of project is Rs 7.25 crore. "The New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) is

developing Smart Roads that are not only aesthetically evolved, but also designed to ensure user-convenience and experience without compromising their safety. The Council has approved two projects for resurfacing of roads," said the senior NDMC official. "It been observed that condition of some avenue roads has deteriorated and completed five-year period, and it has been decided that strengthening and resurfacing of these avenue roads is required with cold milling process for improving their riding quality and for maintaining existing level of road," he said. The NDMC has also approved detailed estimate amounting to Rs 50.79 lakh with 5 per cent contingencies for supplying.

IGIA's plush arrival terminal at T1 becomes operational

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA) is all set to receive passengers at the newly-constructed state-of-the-art "Arrival Terminal" of T1 from Thursday. The terminal will become operational with the arrival of IndiGo flight (6E 6532) from Goa at 3.20 AM on Thursday.

"With the opening of the new arrival terminal, the entire arrivals operations of T1 (IndiGo and Spicejet) will shift from the existing facility to the new one. Departure operations will continue from the existing terminal, and will eventually be integrated with



the new arrivals hall post completion of the expansion works," said a spokesperson of the Delhi International Airport Limited (DIAL) According to officials, DIAL, a GMR Infrastructure-led consortium, has built the new T1 Arrivals as part of Delhi Airport's ongoing phase-3A Expansion project "The new arrival terminal would also offer a distinctive experience to people with a contemporary meet and greet

zone, plush forecourt area, including landscaping and kiosks for food and beverage (F&B), retail and expanded parking area for cars, and more," said the spokesperson.

"On the city side, the pick-up lanes outside the arrival terminal have been realigned and widened with three additional lanes, taking the total number of lanes to 11. This will ease vehicle traffic congestion and significantly improve passenger experience and convenience during pickup," the spokesperson added. "T1 at Delhi airport will now offer a distinctive experience to arriving passengers and also to those coming in to meet and greet the arriving passengers.

Brick-kilns to convert to eco-friendly technology

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

In a move aimed to fight air-pollution, the Government has made it mandatory for the existing brick-kilns to convert to the eco-friendly zigzag technology or vertical shaft within next two years. Henceforth, only those new structures will be approved which follow such a technique.

A notification in this regard has been issued by the Union Environment Ministry on February 22, 2022.

Also, as per the notification, new brick kilns have been mandated to use piped natural gas (PNG) as fuel in the brick-making process while the existing one shall use only approved fuel such as coal, fire wood and/or agricultural residues besides PNG. Use of pet coke, tyres, plastic, hazardous waste shall not be allowed in brick kilns, as per the notification which comes into force with immediate effect.

Presently, the majority of brick kilns are using fixed Chimney Bulls Trench Kiln (FCBTk) that emits black soot, causing heavy air pollution. According to experts, the real difference between the FCBTK and the zig-zag technology driven brick kiln is that in the former the placement of bricks



is done in a straight pattern, whereas in the latter the bricks are placed in a zig-zag pattern. The zig-zag pattern allows efficient manoeuvre of the air for heating purposes.

As per the rules which will be called the Environment (Protection) Amendment Rules, 2022, brick kilns should be established at a minimum distance of 0.8 kilometre from habitation and fruit orchards. "State Pollution Control Boards/Pollution Control Committees may make existing criteria stringent considering proximity to habitation, population density, water bodies, sensitive receptors, etc," said the notification signed by Union Environment Ministry Additional Secretary Naresh Pal Gangawar.

It states that brick kilns should be established at a minimum distance of one kilometre from an existing brick kiln to avoid clustering of kilns in

an area and will follow process emission/fugitive dust emission control existing guidelines.

The ash generated in the brick kilns shall be fully utilized in-house in brick making. Also, necessary approvals have to be taken from the concerned authorities for extracting the soil to be used for brick making.

A research by the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), a regional intergovernmental organisation working in the Hindu Kush Himalayas as part of the UN's Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC) initiative has found that "there is also a strong business case for converting to zig-zag technology. It reduces coal consumption by 20 per cent, carbon emissions by 40-60pc, produces more A-grade bricks, and brick production can be enhanced as well."

Won't agree to any change in status quo at LAC: Jaishankar

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

As stand-offs persist at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Ladakh for the last two years, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Wednesday India will not agree to any change in the status quo or attempt to unilaterally alter the LAC.

Reiterating the country's stand, he also said India is engaged in talks with China on the eastern Ladakh border standoff with absolute clarity that it will not agree to any change in the status quo. More than 50,000 troops each from both the sides are now deployed in front line positions on the LAC in Ladakh.

In an interactive session at a think-tank in Paris, Jaishankar said he was optimistic about resolving the issue through dialogue and that significant headway was made in many of the friction points following talks between military commanders of the two sides.

"We are absolutely clear that we will not agree to any change in the status quo. Any attempt to change the LAC unilaterally by one side. So, however, complex it is, however long it takes, however difficult it is, I think that clarity is what guides us," he said.

Jaishankar said achieving disengagement is the goal right now and that he was optimistic about the resolution of the issues. "I would say other

than optimism, it is very important to have perseverance.

Believe me, I have got those qualities in reasonable measure and my system has it in the reasonable measure which is more important," he said.

"We will carry on with this and disengagement is right now the goal.

Because it is only when disengagement happens we can then start talking about de-escalation," the minister said.

He arrived in Paris on Sunday on a three-day trip after paying a two-day visit to Germany. The external affairs minister said both sides held several rounds of talks between military commanders with a focus on disengagement.

"As a result of that, we have made significant headway in many of the friction points. There are some frictions points that still remained to be resolved. It has its complexity because these are areas where there are claims and then there are various military considerations which become the subject of the conversation," he said.

The 14th round of military talks had taken place last month during which India pressed for an early disen-



gement of troops in the remaining friction points.

Jaishankar asserted that India is approaching the matter with clarity.

"I am optimistic. I am optimistic temperamentally because if you are into diplomacy and negotiations, it is completely necessary that you are optimistic," he said.

The border standoff in eastern Ladakh erupted in May, 2020, following a violent clash in the Pangong lake area. The face-off escalated after the Galwan Valley clashes on June 15, 2020.

Following the clashes, both sides gradually enhanced their deployment by rushing in tens of thousands of soldiers as well as heavy weaponry. As a result of a series of military and diplomatic talks, the two sides completed the disengagement process in Gogra as well as in the north and south banks of the Pangong lake last year.

'India, France unaffected by vagaries of circumstances'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Relations between India and France are unaffected by the vagaries of circumstances as the ties are based on trust, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Wednesday. He also said the two countries intend to create better options for countries in the Indo-Pacific region.

He made these remarks in relation to the Indo-Pacific in the backdrop of China flexing its muscle in the strategically important region. The minister, however, refrained from naming China.

India's ties with France are based on a great sense of trust and it is a relationship that has been free from sudden shifts and surprises seen in other cases, Jaishankar said.

In an address at a think-tank in Paris, Jaishankar said India and France intend to create better options for countries in the Indo-Pacific region and enable them to make sovereign and free choices as they should neither be subjected to domination nor caught in a binary power rivalry.

The minister said New Delhi is specifically looking forward to France as a key partner in the defence and industrial sectors and "ambitious

ideas" for collaborative defence ventures in India are being explored that will support common interests in the Indo-Pacific as well.

He said India sees France as a trusted collaborator in countering security challenges from the seabed to space and from cyber to oceans.

"Through the tumult of our times, India's relations with France have continued to move forward on a steady and clear course. It is a relationship that has been free from sudden shifts and surprises that we sometimes see in other cases," Jaishankar said at the French Institute of International Relations.

"In India, there is a great sense of trust and confidence in the relationship. It is deeply institutionalised and benefits from a strong political consensus on its importance. I believe that we have seen the same here in France," he said.

Elaborating upon the finer aspects of the ties, Jaishankar said France has never hesitated to voice its own positions on key issues and its lack of dogmatism contributed to building a strong partnership with a rising power like India. "We saw that, for example, when it came to a complex issue like accommodating India in the global nuclear order," he said.

RSS to hold meet with ABPS to lay out future agenda

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As it seeks to expand its 'Shakaas' to one lakh before it completes 100 years of its foundation, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) will hold meeting of the Akhil Bharatiya Pratinidhi Sabha (ABPS), its highest decision-making body, at Karnavati in Ahmedabad, from March 11-13 to work-out future activities.

The top RSS body will discuss in Gujarat the current political situation in the country and may also take up controversies revolving around 'hijab' and views on Uniform Civil Code, according to sources.

As the organisation progresses to its 100th year, it would, among other issues, focus on its further "geographical expansion" reaching the target of one lakh 'Sakhas' from the present strength of 55,000, they said.

RSS was established in Nagpur on September 27, 1925.

There are 6 lakh villages with RSS having only 55,000 and thus would attempt at village,

'Basti' and 'border villages expansion', sources said.

They said RSS has "successfully" conducted

"highway shakhas" in Southern Tamil Nadu that helped accident victims as also 'reduction' in road mishaps.

In 2021, ABPS took place in Bengaluru where only a handful of top functionaries met. The rest joined virtually.

This meeting will be taking place a date after election results to five state assemblies are to be announced.

The RSS, described as the mother organisation of the ruling BJP, is also engaged in collecting details of 'forgotten heroes' of freedom struggle as it had a book released on Manipur "freedom fighters" which, according to their estimate, explains the role of 23 people who were jailed in Andaman.

4,700 cases being probed by ED, only 313 arrested since enactment of PMLA in 2002, Centre tells SC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre informed the Supreme Court on Wednesday that 4,700 cases are being investigated by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) as on date, and only 313 people have been arrested for the alleged offences since the enactment of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) in 2002.

The total amount covered by interim orders of no coercive action passed by the courts in such matters is approximately Rs 67,000 crore, the government told a bench headed by Justice A M Khanwilkar.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta told the bench, also comprising Justices Dinesh Maheshwari and C T Ravikumar, that in money laundering cases relating to Vijay Mallya, Mehul Choksi and Nirav Modi, the ED has confiscated around Rs 18,000 crore by the orders of the courts following due procedure.

The apex court is dealing with a batch of petitions concerning the interpretation of certain provisions of the PMLA.

"As on date, 4,700 cases are being investigated, right from the inception, by the Directorate of Enforcement. The number of cases taken up for investigation each year in last five years varies from 111 cases in 2015-16 to 981 in 2020-21. This is the average number of cases," Mehta told the bench.

He said the top court is dealing with a statute which is not just penal but a preventive and regulatory statute providing for investigation and final prosecution.

"I can tell you at the outset, right from 2002, the year in which the PMLA Act was enacted, till date, there are only 313 arrests. From 2002 till date, in 20 years, 313 arrests," he said, adding, "And the reason is, very strict statutory safeguards."

Tejas to participate in exercise at UK in March

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Indigenously designed and manufactured Tejas light combat aircraft will fly alongside front line fighter jets of several countries in a multi-nation exercise named 'Ex Cobra Warrior 22' at Waddington, United Kingdom from March 6 to 27.

The exercise is aimed at providing operational exposure and share best practices amongst the participating Air Forces, thereby enhancing combat capability and forging bonds of friendship. This will be a platform for Tejas to demonstrate its manoeuvrability and operational capability.

Five Tejas aircraft will fly to the United Kingdom. IAF C-17 aircraft will provide the necessary transport support for induction and de-induction, officials said here on Wednesday.

The participation of the Tejas in UK drills come days after the aircraft displayed its capabilities at the prestigious



Singapore Air Show earlier this month. It was an effort to showcase growing defence manufacturing capabilities of India. Singapore Air Show is a biennial event which provides a platform for the global aviation industry to showcase their products.

The Tejas aerobatic display there took place weeks after India and the Philippines inked the biggest and first ever export deal for Brahmos supersonic cruise missiles. The deal is worth over 337 million dollars.

India is aiming at exporting defence equipment worth over five billion dollars by 2024.

In the past, IAF had participated in similar Air Shows like LIMA-2019 in Malaysia and Dubai Air Show-2021 to exhibit indigenous aircraft and formation aerobatic teams.

Giving a push to the export endeavour, the Union Cabinet in 2020 gave its go-ahead to the sale of Akash missile systems to friendly foreign countries and created a high-powered panel for swifter approval to export of military hardware.

The committee to speed up exports has the defence minister, external affairs minister and the national security advisor on board. Several foreign countries have shown interest in the

Akash missile system during international and local defence exhibitions.

Apart from authorising the export of defence platforms, the mandate of the committee is to explore opportunities for the government-to-government sale of military hardware to foreign countries.

The defence ministry awarded a Rs. 48,000-crore contract to the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) last year for 83 LCA Mk-1A jets for IAF. The first Mk-1A aircraft will be delivered to the air force by March 2024, with the rest slated to join its combat fleet by 2029.

SC quashes plea seeking nixing of offline Board exams

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday dismissed a plea seeking cancellation of offline board examinations for classes 10 and 12 to be conducted by the CBSE and several other boards this year, saying such petitions give "false hope" and create "confusion" among students who are going to appear in these exams.

The apex court observed that the petition is "ill-advised" and "premature" and the authorities are yet to take appropriate decision with regard to conducting exams of the various boards.

"Such petitions give false hope to the persons who are going to appear in the examinations. Those students will be misled by this petition. Let the authorities take decision. If

the decision is wrong, challenge that decision. Here, you want to pre-empt everything," a bench headed by Justice A M Khanwilkar told the lawyer appearing for the petitioners.

"This creates not only false hopes, it creates confusion all over to students who are preparing," said the bench, also comprising Justices Dinesh Maheshwari and C T Ravikumar. The counsel appearing for the petitioners said that most of the state boards have not yet declared the dates for examinations. "Whenever examination is due, they will declare those dates, what is the problem," the bench observed.

At the outset, the counsel appearing for the petitioners, A S Sahai and others, referred to the order passed by the apex court last year in the matter pertaining to board exams

amid the COVID-19 pandemic. The bench said what had happened in the past cannot be the basis to pass order now. "Entertaining such petitions is creating more confusion in the system. Let the authorities take decision," the bench said.

"What kind of petitions are being filed," the top court said, adding, "It is not that because they were entertained last year because of the peculiar circumstances and situation, we will go on and this will become a norm." The top court observed that such kind of petition misleads and in the past three days, it has seen there are news items everywhere on this.

"What kind of petitions are being filed and what kind of publicity is given to this issue," it said, adding, "This has to stop." "Let the students do their job and let the authorities do their job," the bench observed.

Congress alleges ₹6,000 crore coal scam in Gujarat

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Congress on Wednesday alleged a coal scam of Rs 6,000 crore in Gujarat whereby coal meant for small and medium industry was diverted to industries in other states and demanded a time-bound investigation by a sitting judge of the Supreme Court. The opposition party said the probe should investigate the role of all the four chief ministers of Gujarat in the last 14 years when the alleged scam happened.

Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi demanded answers from Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the "missing" 60 lakh tonnes of coal. "60 lakh tonnes of coal missing! Will the Prime 'Friend' Minister say any-

thing on this coal scam," Rahul Gandhi asked in a tweet in Hindi. He cited a news report alleging that 60 lakh tonnes of coal was missing in Gujarat, terming it a Rs 6000 crore scam.

"We demand that a time bound investigation should be constituted under the sitting judge of Supreme Court. This investigation should investigate involvement of all the 4 chief ministers of Gujarat from 2008 till date (Narendra Modi, Anandiben Patel, Vijay Rupani and BhupendraBhai Patel) in this Rs 6,000 crore scam," Congress spokesperson Gourav Vallabh said AICC spokesman.

He alleged that a coal scam of Rs 6,000 crore has come to light in Gujarat, whereby in the last 14 years, instead of giving coal to the small and medium level

industries of the state, agencies of the Gujarat government have sold it to the industries of other states at a higher price. He alleged that coal extracted from various mines of Coal India did not reach the industries for which it was extracted.

Vallabh said it is interesting to note that Narendra Modi (Chief Minister of Gujarat from 2001 to 2014) was also holding the charge of Industry, Mines and Minerals Department of Government of Gujarat (December 2007 to December 2012) after which Vijay Rupani (August 2016 to September 2021) and Bhupendra Patel (Sept 2021 till date) also kept the Industry, Mines and Minerals Department of Government of Gujarat with them.

ED attaches properties of BSF Commandant's kin

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has provisionally attached four immovable properties and four Mutual Funds worth Rs 2.87 crore in the name of Tanya Sanyal (wife of Satish Kumar, Commandant BSF) and his son Bhaskar Bhuvan under the Prevention Of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), in an illegal cattle smuggling case.

The ED had initiated

money laundering investigation on the basis of an FIR registered by CBI against Satish Kumar, the then Commandant of Border Security Force (BSF), Md. Enamul Haque and others for illegal cattle smuggling into Bangladesh from India, the ED said in a statement.

"Investigation by the ED revealed that bribe to the tune of Rs 12.8 crore was deposited by Manoj Sana, associate of Enamul Haque in the bank accounts of Tanya Sanyal and

Badal Krishna Sanyal (father of Tanya Sanyal)," it said in a statement.

Later on, the said 'Proceeds of Crime' were invested in the now attached immovable properties and Mutual Funds. Haque was also arrested by ED on February 18, 2021 and currently he is in ED custody. Proceeds of Crime to the tune of Rs 179 crore till now have been identified by ED, it said.

Meanwhile, the ED, in a

separate case provisionally attached two immovable properties including plant and machinery worth Rs 3.81 crore belonging to SLO Industries Limited under PMLA in a bank fraud case.

In this case, the ED had initiated money laundering investigation on the basis of an FIR registered by CBI, BS&FC, Bengaluru against SLO Industries Limited and its Director Anil Kumar Ojha and others.

Heritage tag for Ram sethu: SC to hear Subramanian Swamy's plea

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday agreed to hear on March 9 BJP leader Subramanian Swamy's plea seeking a direction to the Centre to declare the 'Ram Sethu' a national heritage monument.

The bench comprising Chief Justice NV Ramana and Justices AS Bopanna and Hima Kohli was told by Swamy that the plea has not come up for hearing

for the last many months and that it should not be deleted from the cause list. "We will list for hearing on March 9," the bench said.

Swamy had mentioned his plea for urgent hearing on April 8 last year as well. Before that, on January 23, 2020, the apex court had said it will consider Swamy's plea after three months. The BJP leader had submitted he had already won the first round of the litigation in which the Centre accepted the existence

of Ram Sethu. He further said the Union Minister concerned had called a meeting in 2017 to consider his demand but nothing happened subsequently.

The BJP leader had raised the issue of declaring the Ram Sethu a national monument in his PIL against the controversial Sethusamudram Ship Channel project, initiated by the UPA-I government. The matter reached the apex court, which in 2007 had stayed work for the project on the

Ram Sethu. The Centre later said it had considered the "socio-economic disadvantages" of the project and was willing to explore another route to the shipping channel project without damaging the Ram Sethu.

The apex court had on November 13, 2019 granted six weeks to the Centre to clarify its stand on the Ram Sethu. It had also granted liberty to Swamy to approach the court if the response of the Centre was not filed.

CITU spanner in Kerala’s bid to attract investors

Won’t allow investors to hire staff of their choice: CITU

KOCHI: Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan’s efforts to make Kerala an investor friendly destination took a turn for the worse on Wednesday as the Centre for Indian Trade Union (CITU), the trade union wing of the party, making it known that it would not allow the entrepreneurs to hire the employees of their choice to work in the industrial/business establishments.

Anathalavattam Anandan, the Kerala boss of the CITU, the leading militant trade union in the State that controls the entire head load workers in the State said at the capital city that his union would not accept any kind of agreement that denied the workers the right to work, which is a fundamental right enshrined in the Constitution.

Anandan’s statement came a day after a tripartite agreement between the Kerala Government, the CITU and management of SR Associates, a Kannur based business house signed a contract by which the head load workers owing allegiance to the trade union would have the exclusive right to load and unload heavy materials reaching the business house.

The employees appointed

by the management of the company would be allowed to load only small materials which are sold from the establishment.

Rabeeh Mohammed, the owner of SR Associates had told after the signing of the contract that he was pressurized to sign on the dotted line. “I had toiled in West Asian deserts for almost two decades and invested the entire savings of Rs 70 lakh in this business. I was left with only two options; either shut down the business and go back to West Asia or to toe the CPI(M) line. I chose to obey the party diktat,” Mohammed told The Pioneer from Mathamangalam, a party village. He had recruited ten workers offering reasonably fair salary and allowances.

In Kannur district, villages and small towns which are fully controlled by the CPI(M) are known as party villages and there are hundreds of such party villages in the district.

The dilemma faced by Mohammed made another entrepreneur leave the district and return to UAE. Afzal Kuzhikkad, an expatriate had returned to Mathamangalam and launched a software company AJ Tech IT Solutions

which could have grown into a lead software industry in the State. But he was manhandled when he came for shopping at SR Associates and was driven away by the head load workers.

He shut down the enterprises and returned to UAE on Tuesday after informing his relations and friends that it was safe to be in the oil-rich kingdom than in Kerala.

When it was pointed out to Anandan that the Kerala High Court had ruled that the trade unions and employees were violating all norms of business, he said that his union was not interested in knowing what the court was telling. “Our priority is the rights of workers.

The Court may tell a lot of things because the judges do not understand the pain of the workers,” said Anandan.

Mohammed’s business house remained shut down for weeks because of the agitation launched against it by the workers. Kerala has been seeing exodus of entrepreneurs from the State towards Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Telangana of late. Industries minister P Rajeeve had described the situation in the State a cause of concern.

2 cops held for student leader’s murder in WB

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The police on Wednesday arrested two policemen in connection with the alleged murder of Anis Khan a student leader even as the Left back-student groups continued to take out rallies in all parts of Kolkata jamming streets supporting the demand of the victim’s family for acourt-monitored CBI investigation into the case.

This, even as Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee asked the protesters not to politicize the incident wondering, “how many people were arrested in Unnao or Hathras ... but here the police have arrested their own men ...though one wonders whether these arrested persons are genuine culprits or not.”

Khan a maverick student leader who had incurred the wrath of the local Trinamool Congress leaders from Amta in Howrah district was allegedly-bumped off on Saturday midnight by four persons in police fatigue who came to his house in connection of some police case.

“The family is perhaps

under pressure from some people and is not cooperating with the police ... it has refused to hand over the mobile phone of the victim to the SIT which is a criminal offence in itself,” the Chief Minister said adding “here in Bengal the police are doing their job and have arrested two persons ... but how many people were arrested in Unnao and Hathras,” Banerjee --- who had herself demanded CBI investigation after the Rizwanur Rehman death case in 2007 deriving allegedly maximum political points from the month-longagitation --- said.

Khan had been a popular leader who was gradually gaining publicity among the minority youth through his social media posts.

He had allegedly received threats from the TMC leaders and had also written applications seeking security from State administration and even the Human Rights Commission.

Meanwhile, the Left wing students groups from Jadavpur, Calcutta and Aliya Universities continued to stage protest rallies on Wednesdayblockading roads throughout Kolkata.

Decide in 24 hours if you need CAPF for civic polls: HC to SEC

PNS ■ KOLKATA

Hearing a petition demanding deployment of central forces in the February 27 elections to 108 municipal boards, the Calcutta High Court on Wednesday left it on the State Election Commission to decide if it required central forces. The Court directed the SEC to take a decision in 24 hours on whether it wanted to deploy CAPF. The SEC has been asked to hold a meetingwith the Home Secretary and Inspector General

of Police to decide whether there is a need to deploy central forces, advocate Sabyasachi Sarkar said. A similar order was given by the High Court for February 12 electionsto four municipal corporations of Siliguri, Asansol, Bidhannagar and Chandannagar.

However the SEC decided to go with the State police. The

Trinamool Congress swept the elections often polling more than 90percent votes.

Though there was no immediate response from the opposition BJP inside sources said that the saffron party was planning to move the Supreme Court in support of its demand for central forces.

कार्यालय कार्यपालन अभियंता
लोक स्वास्थ्य यांत्रिकी खण्ड, महासमुन्द (छ.ग.)
E-Mail Id:- eemah-phe-cg@nic.in Telephone:- 07723-223731
पू.क्र. 1049 / व.ले.लि / का.अ. / लो.स्वा.या.खण्ड / महासमुन्द / 2020-21
दिनांक 15 / 02 / 22

कार्यालय कार्यपालन अभियंता
लोक स्वास्थ्य यांत्रिकी खण्ड
R.O. No. 68124/3
R.O. Date: 23/02/2022

कार्यालय कार्यपालन अभियंता
लोक स्वास्थ्य यांत्रिकी खण्ड
R.O. No. 68124/3
R.O. Date: 23/02/2022

GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER OF TRANSPORT
Paribahan Bhawan, Jawahar Nagar, Khanapara, Guwahati-22
Email: report.ctassam@gmail.com Website: www.comtransport.assam.gov.in

No. CT-RS/12/2022/789
RFP No 08 of 2021-22
Pre bid queries reply
This is in reference to RFP No. CT-RS/12/2022/663 issued dated 11th Feb 2022 by the Lead Agency on Road Safety for Procurement of Path Suraksha Mitra KIT for the Lead Agency on Road Safety, Assam. In this regard all prospective Bidders are hereby requested to refer the pre-bid query reply uploaded in e- Procurement website: <https://assamtenders.gov.in/>. The other terms and conditions of the RFP remains unchanged.

-Sd-
Head, Lead Agency on Road Safety
Office of the Commissioner of Transport
Paribahan Bhawan, Jawahar Nagar
Khanapara, Guwahati - 22
Janasanyog/C/12480/21

कार्यालय कार्यपालन अभियंता,
लोक स्वास्थ्य यांत्रिकी खण्ड अम्बिकापुर जिला सरगुजा (छ.ग.)
// Notice Inviting Tender //
एकीकृत पंजीयन प्रणाली अंतर्गत उपयुक्त श्रेणी में पंजीकृत ठेकेदारों से निम्नलिखित कार्य हेतु जिला जल एवं स्वच्छता मिशन सरगुजा (जल जीवन मिशन अंतर्गत ऑनलाईन (Online)) निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है।
Sr. No. **Tender No. (System No.) & Date** **Last Date (Bid Due Date)** **Name of Work** **P.A.C. (Rs. In Lakh)**

1. 126 (93011) Date 14.02.2022 03.03.2022 Constt. of O.H.T., Pipeline work, Instt. Of Submersible Pump, Providing of FHTC, etc. At Village- Parsa, Block-Udaipur J.M. 92.03

2. 127 (93012) Date 14.02.2022 03.03.2022 Constt of O.H.T., Pipeline work, Instt. Of submersible Pump, Providing of FHTC, etc., At Village- Pendarkhi, Block- Udaipur, Under J.M. 51.16

3. 128 (93013) Date 14.02.2022 03.03.2022 Constt of O.H.T., Pipeline work, Instt. Of Submersible Pump, Providing of FHTC, etc. At Village- Pondi, Block- Lakhanpur, Under J.M. 76.57

4. 129 (93014) Date 14.02.2022 03.03.2022 Constt of O.H.T., Pipeline work, Instt. Of Submersible Pump, Providing of FHTC, etc. At Village- Salhi, Block-Udaipur, Under J.M. 102.82

5. 130 (93009) Date 14.02.2022 03.03.2022 Constt of O.H.T., Pipeline work, Instt. Of Submersible Pump, Providing of FHTC, etc. At Village- Salthi II, Block-Lundra, Under J.M. 109.00

उपरोक्त निर्माण कार्य (Online Tender) देखर आमंत्रित की जाती है। चरोहर राशि एवं अन्य जानकारी ई-प्रोक्वोरमेंट वेब पोर्टल (<https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in>) पर देखी जा सकती है।
R.O. No:- 68094/9
R.O. Date:- 23/02/2022

कार्यपालन अभियंता
लोक स्वास्थ्य यांत्रिकी खण्ड
अम्बिकापुर

J&K OK’s policy for promotion of foreign investment in UT

PNS ■ JAMMU

The Administrative Council (AC) which met here under the chairmanship of the Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, Wednesday approved the Policy for Promotion of Foreign Investment in the industrial sector in Jammu and Kashmir- 2022.

Farooq Khan and Rajeev Rai Bhatnagar, Advisors to the Lieutenant Governor, Dr Arun Kumar Mehta, Chief Secretary, J&K, and Nitishwar Kumar, Principal Secretary to the Lieutenant Governor attended the meeting.

According to a statement issued by the Department of Information and Public Relations, "The new policy is

based on the guiding framework on FDI issued by the Government of India through the RBI and DPIIT and will be valid for the next 10 years". "It aims to facilitate large foreign investments greater than Rs.100 crore with a minimum of 51% foreign stakes", the statement read.

The policy also provides for identifying parcels of land in various industrial estates to be given exclusively to industries with foreign investments including vertical rise premises in the form of multi-purpose buildings/complexes, with plug and play facilities.

According to a government spokesman, "the land allotment process will be regulated by the J&K Industrial

Land Allotment Policy, 2021-30, whilst such units will also be eligible for benefits, incentives, and support under the Jammu and Kashmir Industrial Policy 2021-30 and New Central Sector Scheme for the industrial development of Jammu and Kashmir".

For optimal utilization of land resources and to provide integrated services to multiple players, the policy also envisages the establishment of multipurpose complexes for foreign investment by developing IT tower projects through private players in Sempora, Pampore and Exhibition Ground, Jammu. These towers will house different business activities and will form a part of the 'Industrial Complex for Foreign Investment'.



A girl helps her brother in holding an umbrella on a snow-covered road, during winter snowfall, in Srinagar on Wednesday PTI

कार्यालय कार्यपालन अभियंता, लोक स्वास्थ्य यांत्रिकी खंड-सुकमा, (छ.ग.)
(जिला, जल एवं स्वच्छता मिशन, जिला-सुकमा)
"ई-प्राक्वोरमेंट प्रथम निविदा सूचना"
पि. क्र. 133,134,135,136,137,138,139,140,141,142,143,144,145,146,147,148,149,150,151,153 / पि.प / जेजेएम / डी.डब्ल्यू.एस.एम / लो.स्वा. या.ख. / सुकुमा एकीकृत पंजीयन प्रणाली के अंतर्गत सहाम श्रेणी में पंजीकृत ठेकेदारों से जल-जीवन मिशन के तहत एकल श्राम योजनांतर्गत निर्धारित शैड्यूल अनुसार पाईप लाईन विस्तार, उच्च स्तरीय जलटंकी निर्माण, धरेलू नलकनेक्शन प्रदाय आदि कार्य हेतु प्रपत्र "ए" में ऑनलाईन online निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है:-

स.क्र.	निविदा सूचना क्रमांक	सिस्टम निविदा क्रमांक	ग्राम / विकासखण्ड	अनुमानित लागत (लाख में)
1	133	93037	कोलाईगुडा / कोण्डा	27.51
2	134	93039	समुनापाट / सिन्धगढ़	104.44
3	135	93040	किरुलपन / कोण्डा	25.26
4	136	93041	लेमेलवाड़ा / कोण्डा	57.02
5	137	93042	गचनपल्ली / कोण्डा	23.22
6	138	93043	सिलामुडा / कोण्डा	66.01
7	139	93044	सालेन / सिन्धगढ़	89.86
8	140	93045	केलसोन / सिन्धगढ़	28.69
9	141	93046	सिलामुडा / कोण्डा	17.39
10	142	93047	विरसलपन / सिन्धगढ़	80.09
11	143	93048	सदरपाल / सिन्धगढ़	83.50
12	144	93049	चेन्लमन / सिन्धगढ़	51.08
13	145	93050	कवासीरस / सिन्धगढ़	83.99
14	146	93051	बण्वा / कोण्डा	40.32
15	147	93052	ब्रह्मलोना / कोण्डा	13.06
16	148	93053	ब्रजुगामाड़ / कोण्डा	15.73
17	149	93054	सुदपा / कोण्डा	19.21
18	150	93106	एरुपाड / कोण्डा	9.58
19	151	93107	गोनापाड / कोण्डा	21.26
20	152	93108	केहला / कोण्डा	23.39
21	153	93109	मैलावामा / सिन्धगढ़	125.70

नोट :- उपरोक्त निर्माण कार्य की निविदा की सामान्य शर्तें, विस्तृत निविदा, निविदा विज्ञप्ति, निविदा दस्तावेज एवं अन्य जानकारी ई-प्राक्वोरमेंट की वेब पोर्टल <http://eproc.cgstate.gov.in> पर दर्शित एवं डाउनलोड की जा सकती है। निविदा की अंतिम तिथि 09.03.2022 तक है।
R.O.No - 68110/9
R.O. Date - 23/02/2022
हस्ता / -
कार्यपालन अभियंता
लोक स्वास्थ्य यांत्रिकी खण्ड सुकुमा

OFFICE OF THE JOINT DIRECTOR
INSTITUTE OF VETERINARY BIOLOGICALS
A.H. & VETERINARY DEPARTMENT, KHANAPARA, GUWAHATI-781022
NOTICE INVITING TENDER FOR "EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI) FOR SELECTION OF TECHNICAL EXPERT CONSULTANT FOR PREPARING THE PRE-DETAILED PROJECT REPORT FOR UP-GRADATION OF IVB TO cGMP STANDARDS AND CONSTRUCTION OF BSL- III DIAGNOSTIC FACILITY AT ANIMAL HEALTH CENTRE, KHANAPARA"
Sealed Tender affixing court fee stamp of Rs.8.25/- on behalf of the Director A. H. & Veterinary Department, Assam, Chenikuthi, Guwahati-781003 are invited in single bid system from reputed Consultancy Service Provider for supply of "EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI) FOR SELECTION OF TECHNICAL EXPERT CONSULTANT FOR PREPARING THE PRE-DETAILED PROJECT REPORT FOR UP-GRADATION OF IVB TO cGMP STANDARDS AND CONSTRUCTION OF BSL- III DIAGNOSTIC FACILITY AT ANIMAL HEALTH CENTRE, KHANAPARA" under the Head of account 2403-00-001 - 0172-000-05-03-EE-GA-V
Schedule of Tender

Sl.	Activity Description	Schedule
1	Tender No.	IVB/GMP/(01)/2021 -22/208 dated 23rd Feb/2022
2	Published Date	25th February/2022
3	Issue of bid documents (duration)	26th February/2022 to 18th March/2022
4	Bid submission start date	26th February/2022
5	Bid submission end date	18th March/2022 (17.00 PM)
6	Technical Bid opening date	19th March/2022 (14.00 PM)
7	Financial Bid opening date	After recommendation from Departmental Bid Management Committee (DBMC)

The complete bid document may be collected from the office of the undersigned only. In the event of specified date for submission of bids are being declared a holiday for purchaser, the bid will be received up to the appointed time on next working day and will be opened at the appointed times and location on the same day.
Mode of bid submission:- The bid should be submitted at Office of the Joint Director, Institute of Veterinary Biologicals, Khanapara, Guwahati-22.
Joint Director
Institute of Veterinary Biologicals
Janasanyog/C/12495/21
Khanapara, Guwahati-781022

Essential services hit by snowfall being restored: J&K

Srinagar: Jammu & Kashmir administration on Wednesday said all the essential services, affected by heavy snowfall, were being restored on war footing for the convenience of general public.

Plains of South Kashmir received two to three feet snow, while Central Kashmir received one to 1.5 feet snow and North Kashmir six inches to one foot. Besides, hilly areas received two to four feet snow which affected normal life and services.

"All the essential services are being restored on war footing in Kashmir valley following heavy snowfall since Tuesday," Divisional Commissioner Kashmir P K Pole said. He also appealed general people to keep patience and support the administration to restore affected services. "The Mechanical Engineering Department completed 70 per cent snow clearance under Priority Phase-I while PWD cleared snow from all the roads falling under its jurisdiction," he said.

Pole said apart from five to six per cent water supply lines which have been affected, all other Water Supply Schemes are functional. He said that the affected water supply schemes will be restored soon for which men and machinery have been put on work.

Two more held in Bajrang Dal activist murder case; curfew extended

Shivamogga: Two more persons were arrested in the Bajrang Dal activist murder case in Shivamogga, where district authorities have extended the prohibitory orders till Friday.

Home Minister Araga Jnanendra said on Wednesday that he has ordered an inquiry against the policemen posted in two police stations in this district headquarters town, in the back-drop of the incident.

Underlining the need to audit the performance of Kote and Doddapete police stations in Shivamogga, he said, "We need to ascertain how many police officers and personnel were there in these two police stations in the past five years and how they monitored these accused (those eight arrested) who have a huge criminal past." He warned that "irresponsible" police officers will not be spared, which led to "the incidents".

Shivamogga Superintendent of Police B M Laxmi Prasad said on Tuesday six people have been booked in connection with the murder of the 28-year-old Harsha, who was stabbed with lethal weapons by a group of people here on Sunday night.

"Eight people have been arrested so far officially while interrogation of others is on," Jnanendra, who hails from the Shivamogga district, told reporters.

FIRST COLUMN

MOVING TOWARDS
A TECH EVOLUTION

Its continuity differentiates it from similar past revolutions



VINAYSHIL GAUTAM

Throughout the recorded history of mankind there are several references to technological marvels and breakthroughs. They have come in the form of building constructions, weapons of warfare and handling of water flows and other sectors. The evidences are available from the Andes area, river valleys such as Tigris/Euphrates, Indus/Ganga valleys, Yangtze region in China, and more. Be it the Inca civilization, that of Mayas or the pyramids of Egypt and some of the temple construction of India, there are many technological marvels. Some of them are yet waiting to be fully deciphered and replicated. The unique thing about all these experiences is — most of them could not replicate themselves. There was no continuum, and it came to an abrupt break, illustratively, some of the features of the temple architecture of peninsular India are still fully



to be explained. How pyramids came up without any current evidence of cranes remains a marvel. How these powerful intellectual traditions came to an end is not known. But come to an end they did. The unique feature of the present 'industrial revolution' is not only that it has a technological base, but that revolution is a continuing one and has gradually spread to more areas. It is not only continuous and continuing but the spread is widening and deepening. That is what makes the technological dimension of this industrial revolution a unique one in human history. It is this continuity which puts it apart from other previous similar revolutions.

The current technological revolution has often meant faster, diversified and constant upgradation. It has given rise to a whole new technological expertise. An expertise which is required not only at the operational end where more and more people are covered but at other levels also. The other levels include an almost continuous upgradation of technology. Of this the mobile phone is a good example. Ever so frequently the technology reaches a new threshold and the commands become more complex or simple. Whichever way one looks at it, they keep changing. This simply means a technology is impacting every day lives on a continuous basis almost everywhere. Its not possible to ignore this process because even in one of its manifestations, let us say digitalization - it has been adopted as a governance instrument almost universally. This leaves the technologically uneducated individual - not just in the backwaters, but in wilderness. The person can attract clauses of legislation in areas where they may not simply have the ability or opportunity to adopt or even upgrade. It may need access to resources, of purchasing an instrument for which he may not even have the capacity. When daily living is itself a matter of doubt because of deficiency of resources available at an individual level, what can be the hope of looking at technological literacy let alone technological upgradation? Concerns like the one outlined above need to be flagged as important policy concerns which need to be built into the larger civil society debate. Excessive admiration and observation of technological compulsions may create divisions in the society which will ultimately need a response. However, it is much better to anticipate them. The above narrative amongst other thing, intends to focus on an urgent need of policy realignment and refocussing of the protocols of progress. This has become more evident during the pandemic. There are several country cases from South Sudan to Singapore which needed to be addressed, analyzed and understood to ensure that the evolutionary growth of the human race continues to be more uniform and manageable. That is a much-needed requirement of the future for which action must begin now.

(The writer is an acclaimed management consultant. The views expressed are personal.)

BJP must review its Govt's hijab response



ARUN SINHA

If the party really wants to empower Muslim women, it has to do a lot more: Ending violence and discrimination, besides educating their girls

The BJP's top leadership needs to review whether the way their Karnataka leaders have handled the hijab row is working in or against the party interest. At the first glance, it seems the party has lost some of the goodwill it had earned among Muslim women by passing the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights) on Marriage Act, popularly known as the triple talaq law, two and a half years ago. Even the Bharatiya Muslim Mahila Andolan, the organisation of Muslim women that had collaborated with the Modi government on the drafting of the law and full-throatedly supported it—ignoring the ridicule of the liberals and leftists for not seeing the party's real design which was not to protect the Muslim woman from the tyranny of instant divorce but to pull down a part of the fort of the Muslim Personal Law—has expressed opposition to the Karnataka government's decision to bar hijab-wearing girls from classrooms.

With what tremendous enthusiasm had the BJP rushed the triple talaq law through Parliament! It did it, it claimed, for the empowerment of the Muslim woman!! Prime Minister Modi tweeted: "Parliament abolishes Triple Talaq... This is a victory for gender justice... It will contribute to women empowerment... India rejoices today!"

And truly, after the law was passed, the number of complaints from Muslim women about instant divorce amazingly dropped. But the BJP's Muslim women's empowerment juggernaut stopped there. It needed to go beyond. The abolition of triple talaq deterred the Muslim husband from divorcing his wife by uttering 'Talaq' thrice, but it did not stop him from getting rid of her by uttering 'Talaq' once and not revoking it over a waiting period of three menstrual cycles or three lunar months. The man was still on top. The woman could do nothing. She would be out of his home and out of his life after 90 days. He would pay her the sum of 'mahr' (dower he agreed to pay her at the time of marriage) and the maintenance for 90 days. That was all he needed to do under the law and say goodbye.

The BJP should have taken one more step after abolishing triple talaq: they should have scrapped the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights On Divorce) Act 1986 which was passed by the Rajiv Gandhi government to override the Supreme Court judgement in the Shah Bano case entitling the divorced Muslim wife to maintenance from her husband not only for the waiting period but for life. The BJP had alleged that Rajiv Gandhi had succumbed to the pressures of the mullahs. It stirred up Hindu passions to build up a huge support for itself on the issue. But even though it has been in power at the Centre for eight years it has not done away with



MUSLIMS MUST BE ENCOURAGED TO LIVE IN AREAS THAT HAVE A MIXED POPULATION. THIS CAN HAPPEN ONLY WHEN POLITICAL PARTIES AND GOVERNMENTS DO NOT ALLOW COMMUNAL VIOLENCE AND DISCRIMINATION AGAINST MUSLIMS TO TAKE PLACE IN THE FUTURE

(The writer is an independent journalist and author. The views expressed are personal.)



the law. It must do it, so that divorced Muslim women can be entitled to a lifelong maintenance.

And if the BJP really wants to empower Muslim women, it has to do much more. For, a lifelong maintenance would not be enough for the empowerment of the Muslim woman. Even if she gets an alimony she would have to live as a dependant of someone as the money would never be adequate. This is the scenario that discourages even Hindu women from getting out of an oppressive marriage though they are entitled to an alimony under law. In either case—whether the husband divorces her or she divorces her husband—the woman should be independent to live with dignity and honour.

Recent trends among younger generations have shown that freedom of choice is propelled by economic independence. The wife is not willing to live in an oppressive marital relationship because she earns a livelihood for herself. Female employment is the key to female empowerment. And female employment will not happen without female education. And female education will not happen without females going to schools and colleges. So if the BJP is truly for the empowerment of Muslim women it should not stop hijab-wearing Muslim girls entering classrooms.

Hijab is a matter of choice. Some Muslim girls wear it, others do not. Even if the BJP sees it as regressive and forced upon girls by their parents or the Wahabists, it should allow it. The party must realize that by barring hijab-wearing girls it would be driving them deeper into the clutches of the forces of orthodoxy. The BJP's aim should be to help more and more Muslim women get an education. Education will lead to employment. Employment will take them to workplaces. Exposure to a dynamic multicultural environment will make them think anew about orthodox cultural practices. It could lead to more Muslim women marrying men from other faiths—something that is not happening in India—adding to the growing number of religion-neutral or bi-religious couples and contributing to making of a culturally healthy India, as it happened in the US.

The BJP must realize that the average Muslim girl lives in an environment of fear and insecurity. Rape of Muslim women has been common in riots. Communal violence and prejudices have driven large numbers of Muslims to live in ghettos. In the ghettos, patriarchy and orthodoxy rule. Men, deriving power from the responsibility to protect the women of their families, force them to wear a burqa and hijab when going out so as to not

attract attention towards themselves. They are not very keen to give girls higher education, for that would mean going far from the ghetto and more risks to their security, leaving aside the risk of their 'corruption' with 'modern, western' education.

The Muslim ghettos must melt. Muslims must be encouraged to live in mixed neighbourhoods. This can happen only when political parties and governments do not allow communal violence and discrimination against Muslims to take place in the future.

If that happens, Muslim girls will feel more secure, and more and more of them will come to schools and colleges. Even their parents would have no ground to deny them education. Even if they want their girls to go to their classes in hijab, so be it. At least the girls will be getting an education. That will open new doors for them. That will take them to different worlds.

Will the BJP ensure there is no violence and discrimination against Muslims? Will it give full attention to the education of Muslim girls and leave the future of hijab to the future? Or does it want people to believe that its responsibility for Muslim women's empowerment ended with the triple talaq law? Are we asking too much of the Great Saviour of Muslim women?

POINT COUNTERPOINT

WE HAVE NEVER SAID THERE WOULD BE A FRONT WITHOUT THE CONGRESS. WE SAID TO TAKE THE CONGRESS ALONG.
— SHIV SENA LEADER
SANJAY RAUT



THESE LEADERS HAD COME TOGETHER AGAINST BJP BEFORE THE 2019 POLLS, BUT NOTHING HAPPENED.
—BJP LEADER
DEVENDRA FADNAVIS

UP: Can an ascendant SP alter 2024 course?

The BJP in its run-up to the 2024 Lok Sabha elections should not be taken lightly. It has organisational and official strength to bounce back

With four phases over, elections in Uttar Pradesh go east, including to Amethi, Ayodhya and Gorakhpur. Here, the number of migrant workers who were subject to ill-treatment during the first Covid-19 lockdown is the highest. The mood here is influenced by rising prices in the region which already has high poverty levels. They have been hit hard periodically, since after demonetisation.

Stray cattle are a big issue. In the east like in the west, they devastate farm produce and there is no way to resolve the problem. The "gomata" approach of the BJP after coming to power has swelled the number of its adherents. Linguistic minorities like Bengalis and Punjabis are



SHIVAJI SARKAR

(The writer is a senior journalist. The views expressed are personal.)

largely with BJP.

Efforts of Congress leaders Priyanka Vadera and Rahul Gandhi to activate the party and a possible tacit tie-up with Samajwadi Party can make some difference to opposition numbers. BSP has committed Jatav votes but other Dalits may split among various parties. The Hathras gang-rapes may realign Valmikis who previously voted BJP. So may the Unnao incident in central UP.

Since 1985, UP has not re-elected an incumbent government. If Yogi succeeds, he would establish a record. The BJP is not leaving it to chance. Even during the 2017 poll, the state did not see so many top BJP leaders campaigning. Home Minister Amit Shah is continuously visiting and is said to be the organising mas-



termind. Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed over 11 large rallies till the beginning of poll process attacking communal "samajwadis": The latter say that is keeping SP in the reckoning.

Deputy chief minister Keshav Prasad Maurya contesting from Sirathu near Allahabad faces hostile crowds like many ministers like Shrikant Sharma, Suresh Rana, Sanget Som did in the west. Sharma was jeered all over in Mathura. Former central min-

ister Mahesh Sharma was shooed away from his home village in Bulandshahr for not visiting the area. In all these incidents, the BJP workers remained silent spectators. The SP-RLD had interestingly pitted Pallavi Patel, a good orator and sister of central minister Anupriya Patel of Apna Dal against Maurya cornering him in the constituency.

Would it change the voting pattern that was overwhelmingly for BJP in 2017? Not easy to say. The state government's reported dictat to government employees to coerce postal ballot voters has reportedly caused consternation. There is a SP-RLD push back on account of this while the poll staff have now distanced themselves from parties.

The BJP is surprised the

way SP leader Akhilesh Yadav has done his social engineering. This has led the SP penetrate hitherto impregnable areas like Agra and Mathura in the west and as well as many other seats in the east. The diligent home work of Akhilesh helps SP by having a wider alliance with caste groups beyond the Yadavs and his family members. Similarly, Jayant Chaudhury has spread his wings and emerged as more than a Jat leader in the aftermath of the year-long kisan agitation. The kisan, Gujar, Pal, Baghel, Prajapati and similar smaller caste groups have moved to SP-RLD.

There is also a conflict between who takes the credit for welfare programmes. The SP-RLD combine accuses BJP

of grabbing credit for programmes introduced by SP and other governments.

Even Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath himself is said to be roughing it up in Gorakhpur as his disciple Sunil Singh on SP ticket faces him and alleged erstwhile area strongman, Hari Shankar Tiwari's family opposes.

But there is a different aspect to it all. The minority votes lining up for SP-RLD have fuelled a counter-passion for BJP's Hindutva, Ayodhya, Vindhyavasini temples and Krishna temple in Mathura. An Aligarh professor Sajjad said before the polls in western UP that overtly the minorities, Jats and farmer groups appear to be together but they may not be as cohesive as they appear. The voting

may not reflect the overt mood.

RSS leader Indresh Kumar has activated his Rashtriya Muslim Manch to woo the Christians and Muslim minorities groups in Lucknow, Amroha, Moradabad and now even in Goa, Uttarakhand and Manipur to help BJP. Kumar has had separate meetings with Muslim women and his media coordinator Shahid Sayeed says the women who benefited by triple talaq annulment are with BJP. Many also have received PM Awas houses.

The BJP in its run up to the 2024 Lok Sabha elections should not be taken lightly. It has organizational and official strength to bounce back. Its leaders say that even with lesser seats than 325 now it would have enough to be in power.

Biden, Putin signal bigger confrontation ahead over Ukraine

AP ■ MOSCOW

The East-West faceoff over Ukraine escalated dramatically Tuesday, with Russian lawmakers authorising President Vladimir Putin to use military force outside his country and US President Joe Biden and European leaders responding by slapping sanctions on Russian oligarchs and banks. Both leaders signaled that an even bigger confrontation could cause economic turmoil for Russia but said they would go ahead if there is further aggression.

The measures, accompanied by repositioning of additional US troops to Baltic nations on NATO's eastern flank bordering Russia, came as Russian forces rolled into rebel-held areas in eastern Ukraine after Putin said he was recognising independence of separatist regions in defiance of US and European demands. Speaking at White House, Biden said the Kremlin flagrantly violated international law in what he called "beginning of a Russian invasion of Ukraine."

He warned of more sanctions if Putin went further. "We are united in our support of Ukraine," Biden said. "We are united in our opposition to Russian aggression." When it comes to Russian claims of a justification or pretext for an invasion, Biden said, "None of us will be fooled. None of us will be fooled. There is no justification."

Hopes for a diplomatic resolution to threat of invasion, which US officials have for weeks portrayed as all but inevitable, appeared to evaporate.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken cancelled plans for a Thursday meeting in Geneva with his Russian counterpart, saying it would not be productive and that Russia's actions indicated Moscow was not serious about a peaceful path to resolving crisis.

Western nations sought to present a united front, with more than two dozen European Union members unanimously agreeing to levy their own initial set of sanctions against Russian officials. Germany also said it was halting process of certifying Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline from Russia - a lucrative deal long sought by Moscow but criticised by US for increasing

Europe's reliance on Russian energy. The US, meanwhile, moved to cut off Russia's government from Western finance, sanctioning two of its banks and blocking it from trading in its debt on American and European markets. The administration's actions hit civilian leaders in Russia's leadership hierarchy and two Russian banks considered especially close to Kremlin and Russia's military, with more than \$80 billion in assets. That includes

freezing all of those banks' assets under U.S. Jurisdictions. Biden, though, did hold back some of broadest and toughest of financial penalties contemplated by U.S., including sanctions that would reinforce hold that Germany put on any start-up of Nord Stream 2 pipeline; an export ban that would deny Russia U.S. High-tech for its industries and military; and sweeping bans that could cripple Russia's ability to do business with the rest of the world.

UN chief: Biggest global peace crisis in recent years

United Nations: The United Nations chief says the world is facing "the biggest global peace and security crisis in recent years" and is calling Russia's declaration of the "so-called 'independence'" of separatist areas in eastern Ukraine a violation of its territorial integrity and accusing Moscow of "the perversion of the concept of peacekeeping." Secretary-General Antonio Guterres told reporters Tuesday he is proud of the achievements of the UN's far-flung peacekeepers, but when troops of one country enter the territory of another country without its consent, as Russian forces have done, "they are not impartial peacekeepers -- they are not peacekeepers at all" as Moscow has called them. Guterres said Russia's unilateral actions also "conflict" with the UN Charter and are "a death blow to the Minsk Agreements" aimed at restoring peace to eastern Ukraine. He called "at this critical moment" for an immediate cease-fire, de-escalation, "restraint and reason," and a halt to actions or statements "that would take this dangerous situation over the brink. AP

China blasts America over approach to Ukraine crisis

AP ■ BEIJING

China is accusing the United States of creating "fear and panic" over the crisis in Ukraine. Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying said Wednesday that China opposes new sanctions on Russia, reiterating a long-standing Chinese position. She said the U.S. Was fueling tensions by providing weapons to Kyiv in response to Russia's large troop deployment around Ukraine's borders and fears of an invasion. China-Russia ties have grown closer under Chinese leader Xi Jinping, who hosted Russian President Vladimir Putin at talks in Beijing earlier this month. The two sides issued a joint statement backing Moscow's opposition to a NATO expansion in former Soviet republics and buttressing China's claim to the self-governing island of Taiwan - key foreign policy issues for Beijing and Moscow.

Ukraine's leader calls up some military reservists

AP ■ MOSCOW

Ukraine's president on Tuesday night announced he was calling up some of the country's military reservists as the threat of a Russian invasion grew, but he added there was no need for a full military mobilisation.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said in a video address to the nation his decree applies only to those assigned to the so-called operational reserve, which is typically activated during ongoing hostilities, and covers "a special period of time," without clarifying what that means. He said: "Today there is no need for a full mobilisation. We need to quickly add additional staff to the Ukrainian army and other military formations." There are about 250,000 troops in Ukraine's armed forces, and some 140,000 reservists.

More sanctions against Russia 'in the locker', warns UK

PTI ■ LONDON

The UK Government on Wednesday warned that it stands ready to escalate sanctions on Russia in the event of an invasion of Ukraine and can "keep turning up the heat" by targeting more banks, wealthy individuals and key companies if President Vladimir Putin refuses to pull back troops from eastern Ukraine.

Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said the sanctions announced in Parliament by British Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Tuesday against five Russian banks and three Russian billionaires linked with President Putin were "severe" but that further measures are being kept "in the locker". Britain has joined international allies to take action after Putin ordered troops to be sent into two Ukrainian regions held by Russian-backed separatists.

"The sanctions we're putting in place are coordinated with the United States, they're coordinated with Europe, to make sure that Vladimir Putin cannot play divide and rule amongst the allies," said Truss.

"We've shown we are united and we will escalate those sanctions in the event of a full invasion into Ukraine," she said.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz has announced the decision to halt approval of the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline under the Baltic Sea, a mega EURO 10 billion project which had been expected to allow Russia to sell more natural gas directly to Europe.

Besides, other European Union (EU) countries and US have also imposed a range of sanctions, including restricting the Russian state from financing its debt from their banks and banning their own companies from trading with the two rebel-held regions.

Europe braces for further strife as Ukraine crisis escalates

AP ■ KYIV

Europe braced for further confrontation on Wednesday and Ukraine urged its citizens to leave Russia after tensions escalated dramatically when Russia's leader got the OK to use military force outside his country and the West responded with a raft of sanctions. Hopes for a diplomatic way out of a new devastating war appeared all but sunk as the U.S. And key European allies accused Moscow

on Tuesday of crossing a red line in rolling over Ukraine's border into separatist regions - with several calling it an invasion. The top U.S. Diplomat canceled a meeting with his Russian counterpart; Kyiv recalled its ambassador and considered breaking all diplomatic ties with Moscow; dozens of nations further squeezed Russian oligarchs and banks out of international markets; Germany halted a lucrative pipeline deal; and the U.S. Repositioned additional troops to NATO's eastern flank bordering Russia.

After weeks of trying to project calm, Ukrainian authorities signaled increasing concern on Wednesday. The Foreign Ministry advised anyone there leave immediately, saying Moscow's "aggression" could lead to a significant reduction in consular services. The head of Ukraine's National Security and Defense Council called for a nationwide state of emergency - subject to parliamentary approval.

Oleksiy Danilov said it will be up to regional authorities to determine which measures to apply, but they could include additional protection for public facilities, restrictions on traffic, and additional transport and document checks. Already, the threat of war has shredded Ukraine's economy and raised the specter of massive casualties, energy shortages across Europe and global economic chaos. Even as conflict took a new, dangerous turn, leaders warned it could still get worse. Russian President Vladimir Putin has yet to unleash the force of 150,000 troops massed on three sides of Ukraine, while U.S. President Joe Biden held back on even tougher sanctions that could cause economic turmoil for Russia but said they would go ahead if there is further aggression.

South Korea's presidential race puts misogyny in spotlight

AP ■ SEOUL

As South Korea enters a bitter presidential race, Hong Hee-jin is one of the many young women who feel that country's politics has become dominated by discrimination against women, even outright misogyny. "Women are being treated like they don't even have voting rights," the 27-year-old office worker in capital, Seoul, said.

For years, South Korean women have made slow but steady progress in the workplace as they confronted an entrenched culture of male chauvinism and harassment.

But this extremely tight presidential race, which culminates March 9, has exposed fragility of what's been won. Top conservative candidate Yoon Suk Yeol and his liberal rival Lee Jae-myung - both men above 55 - are fighting for what they see as a "male" vote crucial for victory. They have increasingly

focused their messages on young men who decry gender equality policies and loss of traditional privileges in a hyper-competitive job market. "Politicians are taking easy path," Hong said. "Instead of coming up with real policies to solve problems facing young people, they are fanning gender conflicts, telling men in their 20s that their difficulties stem from women receiving too many benefits."

The tensions can be seen on streets. Hundreds of women have marched in protest against the "election of misogyny." Small but vocal groups of anti-feminist men have staged rallies in response. Divisive gender politics has grown as South Korea deals with a fast-aging population, a plummeting birth rate, soaring personal debt, a decaying job market and stark inequality. There's also growing nuclear threat from North Korea and fears of being squeezed in confrontation

Donald Trump's DNA, not deposition sought in defamation suit

AP ■ NEW YORK

A lawyer for a woman who accused former President Donald Trump of raping her in the mid-1990s and then filed a defamation lawsuit against him said Tuesday she will not seek to depose Trump prior to trial because it would cause unnecessary delay, but she added that a DNA sample was still being sought.

Attorney Roberta Kaplan first made the revelation in Manhattan federal court during a pretrial hearing before explaining the decision to reporters outside court as her client, E. Jean Carroll, stood by her side. A deposition, Kaplan said, would "inevitably result in an inordinate amount of delay." "We want case to go forward," she said. Attorney Alina Habba, who represented Trump at hearing, said outside court that she had not heard before that Carroll's lawyers

did not want a deposition, a proceeding in which lawyers in civil cases question likely witnesses under oath prior to trial. "It's surprising," Habba said. As for a DNA sample, Habba said: "None has been demanded." Kaplan,

though, said the DNA sample had been requested after the case was first filed in state court and the demand still exists after it was moved to federal court.

The Associated Press generally does not identify people alleging sexual assault, but Carroll has consented to being named in the media. She told reporters outside court that she was looking forward to

the trial on behalf of all women "who have been grabbed and groped, assaulted and raped by men in power and are silenced." "And we are looking to bring justice, at least in this one case, against a powerful man," she said.



UNION TERRITORY OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER JAL SHAKTI DEPARTMENT (PHE) KASHMIR
NEW ENGINEERING COMPLEX, SILK FACTORY ROAD RAJ BAGH, SRINAGAR
TELE: 0194-2311832. TELE FAX: 0194-2311835, E-Mail: kmrphed@gmail.com

CORRIGENDUM-I

Subject:- Conduction of Soil Bearing Capacity test at different locations of Kashmir Valley, by making 01 No bore holes up to 10 meters depth or up to refusal whichever comes first and collecting undisturbed/disturbed soil samples for various laboratory examinations viz Consistency Tests Gradation (Sieve Analysis) Shear Parameters Density & Moisture Content test.

Reference:- This office e-NIT No: CE/PHE/KMR/ JSD/128 of 2021-22 Dated:- 17-02-2022 issued under endorsement No: CE/PHE/KMR/ JSD/41382-417 Date: 17-02-2022.

Please read in Appendix I, PQC 1 as:

"Scanned copy of valid Registration certificate for consultants having requisite testing facility for conducting soil bearing capacity test"

instead of

"Scanned copy of valid Registration certificate for soil bearing capacity tests"

Please read in Appendix I, PQC 2 as:

"Scanned copy of tender fee of Rs 1000/= in the shape of Treasury Receipt/e-transfer (Screen shot of transaction) in favor of FA/CAO Jal Shakti PHE Department Kashmir"

instead of

"Scanned copy of tender fee of Rs 500/= in the shape of Treasury Receipt/e-transfer (Screen shot of transaction) in favor of FA/CAO Jal Shakti PHE Department Kashmir"

No. DIPK-18481/21 Dated: 21-02-2022 **Sd/- Chief Engineer**

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER JAL SHAKTI (PHE) [KASHMIR]
Engineering Complex Rajbagh Srinagar, 190001

NIT No.: 130 of 2021-22
Dated: 21/02/2022

Subject: Notice inviting tenders for engagement/ selection of 'System Integrator/ Contractor for Survey, Design, Supply, Installation, Configuration, Testing, Commissioning and Operation & Maintenance (for 03 years) of the IoT based Smart Water Measurement & Monitoring System for all the rural villages in [Kashmir] province of UT of J&K.

Chief Engineer Jal Shakti (PHE) [Kashmir], (hereinafter called "Client") on behalf of Lieutenant Governor of UT of J&K, invites bids online on e-Procurement portal of J&K Govt. i.e., www.jktenders.gov.in, in three cover system (Technical & Financial covers) from the interested and eligible bidders, in accordance with this RFP document, for engagement/ selection of the System Integrator/ contractor for the Project work, as detailed below, on EPC mode:

Name of Project/ work :- Survey, Design, Supply, Installation, Configuration, Testing, Commissioning and Operation & Maintenance (for 03 years) of the IoT based Smart Water Measurement & Monitoring System for all the rural villages in [Kashmir] province of UT of J&K.

Earnest Money Deposit :- 300.00 lacs

Cost of Bid Document :- Rs. 25000/-

Completion/ Implementation Period :- 12 Months extendable by 06 Months plus 36 Months of O&M.

The scope of the work is spread over all the rural villages covering 10 districts in entire province of [Kashmir].

Interested and eligible bidders (either as a 'sole bidder' or a 'consortium') may submit their complete proposals, both technical and financial, as prescribed in the Tender Document, online on www.jktenders.gov.in along with receipt of requisite Tender Document Cost and the requisite Earnest Money Deposit. The Cost of Tender Document is non-refundable and is to be paid through online mode via NEFT/RTGS in favour of FA/ CAO o/o Chief Engineer Jal Shakti (PHE) [Kashmir] to the JK bank A/C No. 0005040500047728 Branch RESIDENCY ROAD SRINAGAR IFSC CODE: JAKA0CHINAR. The Earnest Money Deposit shall be submitted in the form of Demand Draft, Fixed Deposit Receipt, Bank Guarantee, favouring FA/CAO, o/o Chief Engineer Jal Shakti (PHE) [Kashmir] payable at [Kashmir].

The bidders registered as MSMEs shall be provided tender document free of cost and shall also be exempted from payment of Earnest Money, subject to furnishing of relevant valid certificate for claiming such exemption.

The detailed RFP/ NIT document containing eligibility criteria, detailed scope of work, method of selection/ engagement and the formats for submission of online bids is attached with this NIT and can be accessed on e-procurement portal viz; www.jktenders.gov.in. The bids are invited as per the schedule of critical dates as below:

1. Date of publishing of e-NIT online :- 22/02/2022 9:00A.M
2. Document download start Date & Time :- 22/02/2022, 10:00A.M
3. Last Date for receipt of requests for clarifications :- 03/03/2022, 05:00 PM
4. Pre-Bid meeting Date & Time :- 04/03/2022, 11:30AM
5. Bid Submission Start Date & Time :- 15/03/2022, 10:00AM
6. Bid Submission End Date & Time :- 22/03/2022, 06:00 PM
7. Last Date for receipt of true copies of BG's/ EMD :- 23/03/2022, 04:00 PM
8. Technical Bid Opening Date & Time :- 24/03/2022, 03:00 PM
9. Financial Bid Opening Date & Time :- To be intimated separately.

Terms & Conditions:

1. The firm will be selected under Least Cost Selection (LCS) procedure described in the RFP.
2. Right to revise or amend this notice and / or the RFP Document, fully or partially, prior to the last date notified for submission of offers or on any subsequent date is reserved by the Chief Engineer Jal Shakti (PHE) [Kashmir].
3. Chief Engineer Jal Shakti (PHE) [Kashmir] will not be responsible for any delay in submission of bid due to any reason.
4. Chief Engineer Jal Shakti (PHE) [Kashmir] reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals, cancel the bidding process, at any time prior to the award of contract, without assigning any reason there for and thereby assumes no responsibility of incurring any liability to the affected applicants.
5. For any queries related to bid submission, please contact on kmrphed@gmail.com.

No. DIPK-18523/21 Dated: 22-02-2022 **Sd/- Chief Engineer**

Climate activists try to block access to 3 German airports

AP ■ BERLIN

Climate activists on Wednesday blocked roads leading to Germany's three biggest airports, gluing themselves to the ground before police arrived. Members of the group Uprising of the Last Generation said they wanted to disrupt cargo and passenger traffic at the airports in Frankfurt, Munich and Berlin. The group has demanded that the government take measures to end food waste. It argues that throwing away vast amounts of usable food contributes to hunger and climate change. Past protests involving the blocking of roads and ports have drawn criticism from officials across the political spectrum. "Blocking highways or even airports isn't helpful, it's wrong," Environment Minister Steffi Lemke told weekly Die Zeit. It quoted Lemke saying that anger over Germany's failure to meet its emissions targets didn't justify such protests.

American Navy: 4 die in Hawaii crash of contractor's helicopter

AP ■ HONOLULU

The US Navy said Tuesday four people have died in the crash of a contractor's helicopter on the Hawaii island of Kauai. The Pacific Missile Range Facility said the aircraft crashed on the north side of the installation shortly after 10 a.m. There were no survivors. The names of those killed were not yet available, it said.

The helicopter was being flown by Croman Corp. In support of a training operation, the missile range facility said in a news release. The National Transportation Safety Board said in a tweet the agency is investigating the crash of the Sikorsky S-61N helicopter.

The Sikorsky S-61N was built between 1959 and 1980 by Sikorsky Aircraft, which is now part of Lockheed Martin. It was designed to carry a substantial freight or passenger payload. One version was built to carry up to 30 passengers, according to the Igor I. Sikorsky Historical Archives website. The helicopters were optimized for use over water, for example to support oil rig operations. Versions were also used by all branches of the U.S. Military.

Omani FM in Tehran as nuclear talks in Vienna continue

AP ■ TEHRAN

Oman's Foreign Minister arrived in Tehran on Wednesday for talks with his Iranian counterpart, state media reported, as nuclear talks between Iran and world powers continue in Vienna. Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian welcomed Sayyid Badr Albusaidi upon his arrival, with the visit scheduled to focus on bilateral and international affairs, the IRNA news agency said. Oman has often acted as a go-between to help facilitate back-door diplomacy between the US and Iran, sometimes involving the release of prisoners.

Syria reports Israeli missile attack near Golan Heights

AP ■ DAMASCUS

Israel fired several surface-to-air missiles toward Syrian military positions in the country's south early Wednesday causing material damage, state media reported. State TV quoted an unnamed Syrian military official as saying that the missiles were fired from Syria's Israeli-occupied Golan Heights, and struck areas around the nearby town of Quneitra. It added that the attack that occurred shortly after midnight caused material damage but no casualties. The attack came nearly a week after Syrian state media reported a similar Israeli missile attack on an area south of the capital Damascus that also caused no casualties.

Pak PM Imran Khan leaves for Russia on maiden visit, aims to reset bilateral ties

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Prime Minister Imran Khan on Wednesday left for Russia on a two-day visit - the first by a Pakistani premier in over two decades - during which he will hold talks with President Vladimir Putin to reset bilateral ties and expand cooperation in energy sector.

Khan's visit to Moscow will take place hours after US President Joe Biden and other Western governments imposed tough economic sanctions on Russia for sending its military into parts of eastern Ukraine. Khan is accompanied by a high-level delegation comprising

Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Information Minister Fawad Chaudhry, Planning and Development Minister Asad Umar, Commerce Adviser Abdul Razak Dawood and National Security Adviser Dr Moeed Yusuf.

According to Foreign Office, the bilateral summit between Prime Minister Khan and President Putin will be highlight of visit. "During Summit meeting, the two leaders will review entire array of bilateral relations including energy cooperation."

They will also have a wide-ranging exchange of views on major regional and international issues, including Islamophobia and situation in Afghanistan," the FO said.

It said visit of Prime Minister will contribute to further deepening of multifaceted Pakistan-Russia bilateral relationship and enhancement of mutual cooperation in diverse fields. In a tweet, the Russian Foreign Office said that President Putin and Prime Minister Khan will hold talks in Moscow on Thursday.

UN ends Iraq's requirement to pay victims of Kuwait invasion

AP ■ UNITED NATIONS

The UN Security Council voted unanimously on Tuesday to end Iraq's requirement to compensate victims of its 1990 invasion of Kuwait, with Baghdad having paid out more than USD 50 billion to 1.5 million claimants. Michael Gaffey, Ireland's ambassador to UN in Geneva and president of governing board of UN Compensation Commission, whose fund decided on claims, told council after vote that body's work was historic "for United Nations and for effective multilateralism." "Ultimately, 2.7 million claims were submitted to commission seeking \$352 billion in compensation," he said, and \$52.4 billion awarded to 1.5 million claimants "represents

approximately 15% of total claims." Under a Security Council resolution adopted in April 1991 after a US-led coalition routed Saddam Hussein's forces and liberated Kuwait in first Gulf War, Iraq was required to set aside a percentage of proceeds from its oil exports for fund to compensate victims of conflict. That share was 5% in 2013, when council voted to end the possible military enforcement of several requirements imposed on Iraq after invasion in recognition of improved relations with Kuwait. The level stood at 3% for Iraq's final payment on Jan. 13. Gaffey said governing council adopted its final decision Saturday declaring that Iraq's government fulfilled its international obligations to compensate for losses.

World making Mekong river its dumping ground

PTI ■ DUBLIN

Mounting marine pollution is choking the world's oceans and rivers, especially in Southeast Asia - and it'll only get worse unless something changes. Countries along Mekong River have become world's dumping ground for waste. Rubbish is finding its way into water - killing marine animals and clogging up animals with plastic that are later eaten by humans. And it only got worse during the pandemic. COVID-19 has caused plastic waste to surge in Southeast Asia, particularly with widespread disposal of single-use face masks, takeaway food containers, and packaging from online shopping. In April 2020, Bangkok's daily average of 2,115

tonnes of single-use plastics waste per day grew to more than 3,400 tonnes a day. Lockdowns halted more than 80 per cent of recycling value chain in Southeast Asian countries such as Philippines and Vietnam. Even before pandemic-driven waste, only nine percent of all plastic packaging was recycled and about 12 percent is incinerated. The remaining 79 per cent accumulates in landfills, dumps and natural environment. A lot of this waste, particularly plastic, finds its way into our oceans. As much as 13 million tonnes of plastic enters our oceans annually, according to a 2018 study by UN Environment. Marine plastic pollution is a major transboundary problem, costing an estimated USD 2.5 trillion per year.

ASSAM RIFLES CONDUCTS INAUGURAL HALF MARATHON

The Assam Rifles organised the inaugural Half Marathon as part of 'Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav' celebrations on February 20 at the headquarters of Directorate General Assam Rifles, Laitkor Garrison, Shillong. The Half Marathon commemorates 75 years of India and the glorious history of its people, culture, achievements and also promotes the 'Fit India Movement'.

The Half Marathon was flagged off by Lt Gen KC Panchanathan, AVSM, GOC 101 Area and saw enthusiastic participation of more than 678 serving personnel and families of Assam Rifles, 101 Area, 58 GTC, ARC, Eastern Air Command and CRPF. The run was divided into three categories of 21 km, 10 km and 2.5 km each having its age group. 97 people participated in the 21 km half Marathon, 245 in the 10 km run and 332 in the 2.5 km Run for Fun.

Gp Capt Saikat stood first in the over 51 years, 21 km category while Col EJ Simeon stood second and Lt Gen PC Nair, AVSM, YSM, DG Assam Rifles won the joint third prize with Commander Venkatesh (ret'd). The other winners of the 21 km category as per age group included rifleman Bharat Bhushan, rifleman Devender and sub/SKT Bishan Singh winning the first, second and second prizes in the 41 to 50 age category. Rifleman SU Visle, rifleman Kosting Dhar and rifleman Francis Zimik won



the first, second and third prizes in the 31 to 40 age group. Rifleman Marvin, rifleman Rajesh Singh and Rifleman Anil Gurung stood first, second and third in the 18 to 30 age group category of 21 km.

The fervour and spirit of the marathon were boosted further with the participation of ladies and children in all categories. Children barely five-years-old

participated and completed the 2.5 km category showing their enthusiasm and resolve.

The Assam Rifles are popularly known as the 'Sentinels of the North East' has committed itself towards peace and development of the North East. It has carried out numerous activities promoting 'Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav' and 'Fit India Movement' in the past. This not only brings cohesiveness in the region but also plays a pivotal role towards Nation Building and Unity, thereby making it a "Force that Binds the North East".

Assam Rifles also thanked the sponsors of the event including SBI Bank, YES Bank and the event organisers Cyruns Sports and Wellness.

POWERGRID signs MoU with NFCH for the education of violence-affected children

Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (POWER-GRID), a 'Maharatna' Company under the Ministry of Power, Government of India, signed an MoU with the National Foundation for Communal Harmony (NFCH) for providing financial assistance for the education of 1,632 violence-affected students from Assam, Manipur and Chhattisgarh under CSR. The MoU was signed by Shri V K Singh, Director (Personnel), POWERGRID and Shri Manoj Pant, Secretary, NFCH.



The NFCH is an autonomous organisation under the Ministry of Home Affairs. Under 'Assis', POWER-GRID is providing financial assistance of ₹2.55 crore for one year during 2021-22, for the education of students rendered orphan or destitute due to

death or permanent incapacitation of either or both the parents or the main bread-earner during communal, caste, ethnic or terrorist violence.

POWERGRID has supported NFCH from 2014-15 for the education of children. Last year, 1,260 children were supported out of which 1,048 children are studying in classes up to class 12th, 185 are pursuing their Graduation and Post-graduation courses and 27 children are pursuing professional courses like MBBS/MD, B. Tech, MBA, BCA, B. Ed., BALLB and more.



NTPC achieves another milestone, surpasses the highest annual generation of previous years

NTPC has recorded a generation of 314.89 billion units up to February 18, surpassing the maximum annual generation of 314 BU achieved in 2020-21. Last year, the generation was 270.0 BU till February 18.

NTPC Korba (2600 MW) in Chattisgarh is the top-performing thermal power plant in India with a 94.32 per cent Plant Load Factor between April '21 to January '22, as per the data published by Central Electricity Authority. The total installed capacity of NTPC is 67,832.30 MW having 23 coal-based, seven gas-based, one Hydro, 19 renewable energy projects.

Regional Board Meeting of ESIC Gujarat held

The 89th Regional Board Meeting of ESIC Gujarat was held on February 16 under the chairmanship of Shri Brijeshkumar Merja, Hon'ble Minister, Labour, Skill Development & Employment at Saraswati Hall, Swarnim Sankul-2, Sachivalay, Gandhinagar. While addressing the Regional Board Meeting, Shri Merja, appreciated that the second meeting of Regional Board has been conducted within four months. He informed the gathering that he met Shri Bhupendra Yadav, Minister of Labour & Employment, Govt of India and apprised him about the recommendations of the Regional Board during the last meeting and assured to take positive decisions.



Shri Ghishulal B Kalal, Member of ESI Corporation & Regional Board, Dr Nitin Vora, Member of ESI Corporation & Regional Board, Smt. Anju Sharma, I A S (Principal Secretary, Department of Labour & Employment, Govt. of Gujarat, Smt. P. Bharathi, IAS, Labour Commissioner,

Draw of lots for JJ dwellers of Bhumiheen Camp

In line with the Government of India's aim to provide affordable housing to the urban poor by the year 2022, the Delhi Development Authority has conducted a draw of lots to allot 679 flats under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) in favour of eligible JJ dwellers of Bhumiheen Camp.

Out of 2,700 households of Bhumiheen Camp, eligibility in respect of 679 households has been decided in respect of JJ dwellers whose documents were complete. The draw of lots was conducted on February 17 for the allotment. Allotment-cum-demand letters to successful/eligible households of Bhumiheen Camp shall be issued shortly.

For the remaining households, deficiency letters have been issued requesting them to submit the requisite documents. As and when the



documents are submitted, a draw in their favour will also be conducted.

All eligible JJ dwellers are to be shifted to built-up EWS flats at Pocket A-14, Kalkaji Extension constructed by DDA on In-house Design and build a model on payment of ₹1,42,000 (including ₹30,000/- as maintenance charges for five years).

Learn how to eat healthy food at Ayush Food Festival

National Institute of Ayurveda, Jaipur is organising AYUSH Expo and Aahar Mela between March 11 and 13 at Shilpgram, Jawahar Kala Kendra. The fair will be inaugurated by the Union Minister of AYUSH. This information was shared by Prof-Sanjeev Sharma, vice-chancellor at the unveiling of Ayush Expo and Food Festival.

The purpose of this programme is to make the public aware of the properties of food, methods of preparing



food and how to prepare food, what is the right way to eat. People would be made aware of improving their health, diet method, improving immunity. The brochure of the AYUSH EXPO & Food Festival was unveiled by Professor Sharma. The poster of the dialogue programme on March 8, Women's Day, was also released. The themes in the program to be organised at Jawahar Kala Kendra will be:

To reach the innovations in AYUSH to the general public.

"To tell about the food and diet of the general public through live lecture, talk show by Ayurveda and AYUSH experts.

"In this, it will be told that at what time to eat which type of food, its maximum qualities can be a friend to us. Which fruit should be eaten whole/raw, the juice of which fruit should be used. Which food cannot be eaten with milk or curd? Such doubts will be resolved by the well known Ayurveda dieticians of the country.

Delicious food prepared by Ayurveda dieticians will be available to the general public for three days and the methods of preparing them will also be taught by the experts to the housewives and the public.

Cultural programmes and street plays will also be organized for three days.

Various competitions for the general public and lucky draws will be organised daily.

In this AYUSH EXPO 50 stalls on Ayush's Startup, Ayush Pharmaceutical companies will be able to showcase their products for one sale.

Manufacture and sale of live food by 50 stalls will be available daily, which will be manufactured by Ayush dieticians.



Webinar for pensioners above 75 years of age

The Ministry of Personnel, PG & Pensions — under the leadership of the Hon'ble Minister of State for Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, Dr Jitendra Singh — has taken concrete steps to ensure ease of living for Pensioners. The Department has been leveraging technology and has been conducting online Pension Adalats, using end-to-end digital portal Bhavishya to generate electronic Pension Payment Orders now being made available to pensioners in their Digi Locker, a series of simplified options for giving Digital Life Certificate by Pensioners have also been brought, in the latest being Face Authentication technique of LC from an android phone.

The Department, earlier on January 5 and 25, had conducted a Pensioners' outreach programme and today conducted its third such programme under the chairmanship of secretary Pension & Pensioners' Welfare, Shri V. Srinivas along with registered Pensioners' Associations and pensioners. The webinar was a knowledge dissemination exercise for pensioners aged 75 years and above in South India. The presentations covered topics such as Family Pension, eligibility, additional pension on achieving age-related milestones, issues about the commutation of pension and getting a Digital Life Certificate from an Android phone.

In the question-answer session, the pensioners requested secretary Pensions to enhance the amount of Fixed Medical Allowance, to facilitate a greater number of CGHS dispensaries, to restore commuted pension after 12 years instead of 15 years, grant additional pension from age 65 years onward instead of 80 years. Among those who interacted were Shri N. Shanmughom from Trivandrum, Dr Selvanayagam from Kanyakumari, Professor G Ramalingam and Shri Vishwanatha from Puducherry, Shri Girish Kanagotagi from Bangalore among others. The pensioners expressed their happiness with the newly launched Face Authentication App for giving Digital Life Certificate.

Secretary Pension Shri V Srinivas took note of the demands and stated that the Department would regularly have such interactive sessions for pensioners and family pensioners. He appreciated the feedback of the pensioners that the recent reforms made by the DoPPW were working well on the ground level especially the face authentication app launched recently. Joint secretary Pension, Shri Sanjiv Narain Mathur informed that DoPPW had roped in the IPPB (India Post & Payment Bank) and that doorstep service for life certificate is also available for giving Jeevan Pramaan. A similar facility has been extended in 100 cities through the consortium of 12 Public Sector Banks. This was in addition to the Video KYC-enabled method of Life Certification which has been started.

POWERGRID, NR-I handed over Medical Equipment to District Hospital, Faridabad

Shri A K Mishra, Executive Director, Power Grid Corporation of India Limited, (Northern Region-I) handed over Medical Equipment to Dr Harish Arya, Dy. CMO, District Hospital, Faridabad on February 18 under the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative.

This will augment the overall health infrastructure of the district. Protection from Covid-19 and general well-being along with the safety and health of the citizens are the top priority of the Government. ABG portable machines help in rapid analysis of blood parameters of critical patients both in Intensive Care



Units and Trauma Centres facilitating attending doctors to quickly ascertain the condition of patients and prescribe a course of treatment.

Speaking on the occasion, Sh. Mishra apprised the Haryana State

officials about the various CSR assistance provided to district authorities during the Covid-19 pandemic. Haryana State officials appreciated the efforts of POWER-GRID in these times of need.

On behalf of District Hospital, Faridabad Dr Harish Arya, Dy. CMO, Faridabad and Sh. Gaurav Singh, Additional CEO from Haryana State CSR Trust were handed over the first phase of equipment. Shri R P Sinha, Sr GM (HR), Shri Vinayak Chauhan, Sr GM (CSR), Shri Vinod Prakash Baxla, Sr DGM (HR) from POWER-GRID and other senior officials were also present at the event.

NDMC organising 'Azaadi ka Amrit Mahotsav'

New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) in its Council Meeting presided over by Shri Dharmendra in the presence of vice-chairperson-NDMC, Shri Satish Upadhyay, MLA & Member NDMC, Shri Virender Singh Kadiyan apart from other NDMC Members Shri Kuljeet Singh Chahal, Shri Girish Sachdeva & Smt Vishakha Sailaninim, Shri Vikas Anand, commissioner-EDMC and Ms Isha Khosla, secretary-NDMC, considered and approved the citizen-centric and employee welfare proposals in the agenda items placed before it:-

1. GREEN ENERGY FOR GREEN PALIKA

NDMC intends to make itself a complete Green Energy consumer. It has embarked upon an ambitious journey of shifting to a 100 per cent renewable energy municipal body of the Country. NDMC has decided to not renew its power purchase agreement with thermal power generating stations and is taking up fresh purchase agreements with only renewable power providers.

Accordingly, Council approved the procurement of 142 MW hydropower from Teesta-III on a medium-term basis i.e. for three years and further extendable up to two years through M/s PTC India Ltd. @ ₹5.03/kWh (inclusive



transmission charges and losses).

2. SMART ROADS

NDMC is developing Smart roads that are aesthetically evolved and designed to ensure user convenience and experience without compromising their safety. Council has approved the two projects for resurfacing of roads.

The condition of some avenue roads has deteriorated and completed five year period, and it has been decided that strengthening and resurfacing of these avenue roads has to be done with the cold milling process for improving the quality of avenue roads and maintaining the existing level of road.

Details of these roads are as under:- 1. Tilak Marg, 2. KG Marg, 3. Dr Zakir Hussain Marg, 4.

Pandara Road, 5. Tolstoy Marg, 6. Hailey Road, 7. Tansen Marg, 8. Babar Road. The total cost of the project is ₹7,25,80,900.

3. 120 TYPE-II FLATS FOR EMPLOYEES AT SECTOR-VII, PUSHP VIHAR, SAKET, NEW DELHI required the Sewage Treatment Plant with the capacity of 100 KLD (MBBR based). For proper commissioning of STP various mechanical and filter parts are needed. This STP is based on MBBR technology.

Council has approved the detailed estimate amounting to ₹50,79,900/- with 5 per cent contingencies for supplying, installation, testing and commissioning of all mechanical & filter parts of Sewage Treatment Plant for the

capacity 100 KLD (MBBR Based) with two years running and maintenance cost.

4. AZAADI KA AMRIT MAHOTSAV

NDMC has organised 27 events in a series. It has also planned 12 events to be organised:

1. AKAM Logo is routinely displayed on the NDMC website in NDMC communications & social media posts and will continue.
2. A Sculpture Camp to carve out 12 black stone sculptures in association with Sahitya Kala Parishad in February/March.
3. Art exhibition in Janpath subway in March/April.
4. Patriotic programmes like band display of Armed Forces at Central Park.
5. Programmes on Shahidi Diwas in March 6. A large size logo of Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav to be installed at various markets/prominent buildings in February 7. Wall Paintings in NDMC Area depicting messages on the theme of AKAM.
8. Programme on Ambedkar Jayanti in April, 2022.
9. Regular programme on AKAM by schools (Debate, drawing on the theme of AKAM); Till August 15
10. Yoga Day in June 11. Regular Swachhta drive in NDMC under the true spirit of AKAM
12. Musical concerts on freedom struggle in Central Park- March/April.

'Super Randonneur' title for SRM AP student

SRM University-AP's Computer Science Engineering Student Koneru Saiprasad won the 'Super Randonneur' title for his outstanding talent in cycling. Saiprasad recently set a new record for the longest distance cycling organized by Adaxi Club India with its headquarters in Guntur, shortly after reaching the target.

Saiprasad elaborated his quest with a beaming note, "On November 6, we cycled from Vijayawada to Nallajerla for 13 hours and then back to Vijayawada (200 km). Similarly, on November 27, he cycled from Vijayawada to Suryapeta on the Hyderabad route for 20 hours and then back to Vijayawada (300 km). He cycled from Vijayawada to Nakrekal for 27 hours on December 18 and back to Vijayawada (400 km). A week ago, he cycled from Guntur to Ramoji Film City and back to Guntur (600 km) in 40 hours, setting a record."

Saiprasad won the 'Super Randonneur' title reserved for those who complete these four events. Saiprasad informed that he has loved cycling since he was a child and focused on long-distance cycling during lockdowns. He dedicated his achievement to his parents and university professors for their support and encouragement in all possible ways.



Villarreal hold Juve in 1st leg



AP ■ VILLARREAL

Dusan Vlahovic lived up to the hype by scoring 31 seconds into his Champions League debut on Tuesday but Juventus have work to do to make the last 16 after being held to a 1-1 draw by Villarreal in the first leg.

Vlahovic found the corner with just his second touch of the

game at La Ceramica but a sensational start for Juve and the Serb's Champions League career was not enough for victory.

Instead, Villarreal's Dani Parejo steered in a deserved equaliser midway through the second half to leave a compelling contest in the balance ahead the return leg in Turin.

At 22 years and 25 days old, Vlahovic is the second youngest

player to score on their Champions League debut for Juventus after Alessandro Del Piero made his mark aged 20.

Vlahovic was signed for an initial 70 million euros from Fiorentina in January and to huge excitement, with Juve boasting the arrival of one of the world's most coveted young talents.

Juventus coach Max Allegri had tried to reduce expectations

on Monday by insisting the striker would have to adapt psychologically and technically to the intensity of the Champions League - but Vlahovic needed less than a minute to find his feet.

It was his second goal in five appearances for Juve after he scored 12 minutes into his debut against Verona earlier this month, following a blistering 25 goals in 31 games for Fiorentina.

Juventus are realistically Italy's last hope of a representative in the quarter-finals after Inter Milan were beaten 2-0 at the San Siro by Liverpool on Wednesday.

Juventus will be favourites to finish the job at home next month but a well-organised and disciplined Villarreal, who won the Europa League last season, showed enough to suggest an upset is far from impossible.

McKennie could be out for 8-12 weeks

Juventus and United States international midfielder Weston McKennie fractured the second and third metatarsals in his left foot during Tuesday's Champions League match against Villarreal.

The club initially expects him to miss 8-12 weeks, Tenorio adds.

The 23-year-old needed assistance to leave the pitch after a tackle from Pervis Estupinan, and McKennie was substituted in the 81st minute of the eventual 1-1 draw. He limped off with the help of the medical staff, unable to put any weight on his left foot, which got caught under the knee of a sliding Estupinan on the play.

McKennie had been among Juventus' brightest players in the match until that point.

The injury comes at an inopportune time for both McKennie's club and country. Juventus,

KEY STATS

2 Dusan Vlahovic (22 years, 25 days) is the second youngest player to score on their Champions League debut for Juventus after Alessandro Del Piero (20 years 308 days).

12 Chelsea's 37-year-old centre-back Thiago Silva won possession 12 times tonight against Lille, the most he's ever done so in a Champions League match, with tonight his 94th appearance in the competition.

14 Édouard Mendy has kept a clean sheet in 14 of his 18 starts in the UEFA Champions League (78%) - the highest clean sheet ratio of any goalkeeper with 5+ starts in the competition's history.

5 Chelsea are the first English team in the history of the European Cup/Champions League to win five consecutive home matches without conceding a goal.

4 Chelsea have scored more goals via corners in the UEFA Champions League this season than any other side (4).

already without several key squad members due to a variety of ailments, are still competing on three fronts and are in an intense battle to finish top four in Serie A.

The US men's national team, meanwhile, will resume World Cup qualifying on March 24. The Americans sit second in the "Octagonal" going into their final three matches - the top three teams automatically clinch berths in Qatar for this year's World Cup.



Holdovers Chelsea beat Lille

AP ■ LONDON

Chelsea showed they can thrive without Romelu Lukaku as Kai Havertz scored after replacing the axed Belgium striker for the 2-0 Champions League last-16, first-leg win against Lille on Tuesday.

Thomas Tuchel's side took control of the tie thanks to Havertz's first-half header and Christian Pulisic's clinical finish after the break at Stamford Bridge.

The holders will expect to complete their progress to the quarter-finals when they travel to France for the second leg on March 16.

But Chelsea's sixth successive win in all competitions was more a referendum on their Lukaku conundrum than an indication of their chances of retaining the trophy.

Lukaku has scored just 10 goals since a club record £97 million (\$131 million) move from Inter Milan last year

that was expected to launch a period of sustained dominance for Chelsea.

He touched the ball just seven times in Saturday's 1-0 win at Crystal Palace, the lowest total by a Premier League player since 2003-04.

Despite being infuriated in December by Lukaku's public questioning of the way he was being used, Tuchel had appeared to back him on Monday, insisting his problems were no laughing matter.

Asked about his decision to drop Lukaku, Tuchel said: "He looked a little exhausted and you have to consider that he's played a lot."

But, tellingly, Chelsea were more potent in Lukaku's absence and it remains to be seen if Tuchel will trust his beleaguered star in the League Cup final against Liverpool on Sunday.

At least Tuchel knows Chelsea have the ammunition to damage opponents while their supposed leading man labours.

Rangers look to finish job against Dortmund

AP ■ GLASGOW

Barcelona's Europa League tie against Napoli is finely poised heading into the return in Italy on Thursday as Rangers look to finish the job against Borussia Dortmund following their stunning 4-2 win in the first leg last week.

Barca needed a Ferran Torres penalty to draw at home to Napoli in the first leg of their knockout round play-off tie after Piotr Zielinski put the Serie A side in front at the Camp Nou.

However, with the away goals rule having been dispensed with this season by UEFA, the heavyweight tie remains very much in the balance going to the Stadio Diego Armando Maradona.

They won 4-1 at Valencia in La Liga at the weekend with Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang scoring a hat-trick, while Napoli are third in Serie A after drawing 1-1 with Cagliari on Monday.



Scottish champions Rangers are hoping to secure a spot in the last 16 as they welcome Dortmund to Ibrox following their stunning 4-2 win in Germany.

It would go down as one of

the best results in their history in Europe if they could see off the Bundesliga giants, but the outcome of the tie could hinge on whether Erling Haaland plays any part.

Barcelona are one of four

Spanish teams aiming to advance to the last 16, with Real Sociedad hosting RB Leipzig and Real Betis leading 3-2 against Zenit Saint Petersburg after the first leg in Russia.

Sevilla, the record six-time winners of the second-tier European competition and who will host this season's final, lead 3-1 as they go to Dinamo Zagreb.

Zverev thrown out of Acapulco tourney after tantrum

AP ■ ACAPULCO

German Olympic tennis champion Alexander Zverev has been expelled from the Mexican Open in Acapulco after smashing his racket on the umpire's chair several times and directing a foul-mouthed rant at the official, the ATP announced on Wednesday.

"Due to unsportsmanlike conduct at the conclusion of his doubles match on Tuesday night, Alexander Zverev has been withdrawn from the tournament in Acapulco," the governing body for men's tennis tweeted.

Zverev - ranked number three in the world - lost his cool when he and doubles partner Marcelo Melo of Brazil were beaten 6-2, 4-6, 10-6 by Britain's Lloyd Glasspool and Harri Heliövaara of Finland. The 24-year-old defending



champion smashed his racket three times just below umpire Alessandro Germani's feet before taking his seat and then rising again to verbally

abuse the official and smash the chair one last time.

He had apparently been irked by a line call during the match.

All England Open draw: Sindhu in same quarter as Yamaguchi

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian badminton stars PV Sindhu and Saina Nehwal were pitted in the same quarter as reigning women's singles world champion Akane Yamaguchi as the draws for the All England Championships 2022 were published on Tuesday.

The tournament will be held from 16 to 20 March in Birmingham.

Sindhu was drawn against a tricky opponent in world No 17 Wang Zhi Yi for the first round, while Nehwal will face world No 10 Pornpawee Chochuwong in her opener in what is set to be a massive challenge for the former world No 1 against a Thai shuttler who has been enjoying great results in recent times contrary to the Indian.

For Sindhu, even before a potential quarterfinal against a familiar foe in Yamaguchi (who she defeated at the last All England), she will need to overcome either Sayaka Takahashi / Supanida Katethong in the second round, two left-handers who could trouble the two-time Olympic medallist.

The men's singles draw also threw up some fascinating early matchups. World No 3 Anders Antonsen and world No 9 and world champion Loh Kean Yew are set for a mouth-watering first round clash in a repeat of the clash in Huelva last year that prompted the Dane to call the Singaporean



"superman". The winner of that match will face the winner of an all-Indian opener between Lakshya Sen and Sourabh Verma. Either way, it promises to be a tough early test for Sen, the worlds bronze medallist.

Srikanth Kidambi, meanwhile, was drawn in the same quarter as World No 1 Viktor Axelsen, who will face 2019 Basel worlds bronze medallist B Sai Pranee in the opener. Axelsen could face Sameer Verma in the second round, while Srikanth takes on the winner of Anthony Sinisuka Ginting and Parupalli Kashyap.

In men's doubles, Chirag Shetty and Satwiksairaj Rankireddy will face Scotland's Alexander Dunn and Adam Hall in the first round. The Indian duo could face the world No 1 Kevin Sukumuljo

and Marcus Gideon in the quarterfinals. We could have an all-Indian second round clash if Krishna Prasad Garaga and Vishunvardhan Goud Panjala win their opening round.

Dhruv Kapila and MR Arjun, the third Indian men's doubles pair competing, were drawn against the world No 2 pair of Mohammad Ahsan and Hendra Setiawan in the first round.

In women's doubles, India's Ashwini Ponnappa and N Sikki Reddy will face Japan's Kie Nakanishi and Rin Iwanaga in the first round.

India's mixed doubles pair of Ishaan Bhatnagar and Tanisha Crasto is also set to face a stern test in the opening round. They were drawn against the Indonesian world No 5 pair of Praveen Jordan and Melati Oktavianti.

Danish player Rune pulls out of Davis Cup tie

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Hosts India have been handed a huge advantage going into their Davis Cup World Group Playoff I tie against Denmark next week, as the World No 90 and the visiting side's top-ranked player, Holger Rune, has confirmed his unavailability for the two-day rubber on the grass courts of the Delhi Gymkhana Club (DGC) here.

Rune, the winner of the 2019 French Open boys' singles title, was expected to spearhead the Danish challenge against India - no other player from Denmark is ranked inside the Top-200 of the ATP world rankings. The presence of the ITF Junior champion (2019) would have spiced up the proceedings at the Davis Cup, with some exciting contest expected between India's singles players Prajnesh Gunneswaran, Ramkumar Ramanathan and Yuki Bhambri. In the absence of Rune, who holds the distinction of being the second youngest male player after Spaniard Carlos Alcaraz to have featured in the Top-100, the Danish campaign will be led by seasoned doubles player.

Manika eyes success at CWG & Asiad

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Back in the top-50 of world rankings after three years, star table tennis player Manika Batra wants to break the top-30 barrier in the near future and she knows she will have to work harder than ever to get there. It is an important year for the 26-year-old who will defend her Commonwealth Games singles crown in Birmingham before travelling to Hangzhou to create more history at the Asian Games after winning a mixed doubles Gold with Sharath Kamal in Jakarta in 2018.

The 2018 Commonwealth Games in Gold Coast was a career defining moment for Manika who exceeded all



expectations by winning as many as four medals, including gold in singles and team.

She beat London Olympics Bronze medallist Feng Tianwei

twice in the competition to etch her name in history books.

Four years later, she feels she is a much improved player.

"A lot changed for me after CWG. I have improved fitness wise and game wise significantly, especially in my movements, but this is not the end and need to keep working harder. Since I am tall, I had to work a lot on my strength and agility support my back and knees."

"This year, we have CWG and Asian Games. In my mind it is there I have to win but focus is on training," said the world number 49.

Ahead of the WTT Contender in Muscat next month, Manika recently trained with mixed doubles partner G Sathiyan in Chennai. The duo is aiming to win an Olympic medal in Paris in 2024.

A medal could not come in Tokyo Games last year but back with Sathiyan, Manika feels it is a possibility. The two won a WTT event soon after reuniting for their Olympic ambitions.

"Sathiyan and I make a good pair. We have improved our rankings. We worked a lot on combination and understanding (recently). Techniques, we can improve even while training on our own. If we are doing well in singles, we can also support our doubles partner better," she said. "2024 Paris is really important for me. I want to win a medal or reach at least the quarterfinals. For that, I need to work really hard and I am doing that."

WT20 audition continues with SL series

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

With the number of claimants increasing heading into T20 World Cup, there will be no let-up in India's willingness to experiment or their intensity in the three-match T20 series against Sri Lanka, beginning here on Thursday.

Coming off a 3-0 whitewash of the West Indies, the in-form Indians will look to do an encore against the visiting Sri Lankans, and the Rohit Sharma-led squad has a realistic chance of achieving that.

But the endeavour to complete another clean sweep will not mean a climb-down from their keenness to give enough game time to as many players as possible in the lead-up to the World Cup, which will be held in Australia in October-November.

The absence of the team's established players, such as Virat Kohli and Rishabh Pant as well as KL Rahul, in the upcoming three T20 Internationals will definitely translate into more opportunities for the likes of Ishan Kishan, Ruturaj Gaikwad and Sanju Samson.

Kohli not there means Shreyas Iyer will get a chance to settle down, play more overs, score some useful runs and stake a claim for one of the middle-order slots, though the for-



mer India captain will come back to claim his number three spot heading into the World Cup.

The duo of Gaikwad and Iyer failed in the third T20Is against the West Indies and they would hope that they impress against Sri Lanka.

One of the highlights over the last week was Venkatesh Iyer's ability to finish off matches and if he is able to continue in the same vein against the islanders, while managing to improve his bowling, the Indian team management will have

a world-class all-rounder at its disposal going into the showpiece Down Under.

Now that Suryakumar Yadav has been ruled out of the series alongside Deepak Chahar due to injuries, Venkatesh will assume added responsibility when it comes to batting in the back 10.

Sanju Samson has also been drafted into the squad and it would be interesting to see whether the management gives him a go in the playing XI.

Spinner Ravi Bishnoi also impressed in his maiden T20I series and he will look to march ahead with the same momentum.

Pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah has come back into the team to bolster the bowling attack and, along with Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Mohammed Siraj, will comprise a formidable pace bowling unit.

Bhuvneshwar will take confidence from his fine showing against the West Indies, especially in the death overs.

Recently, head coach Rahul Dravid had said that he and Rohit are pretty clear about the team for the marquee tournament in Australia in less than eight months' time.

"I think we have got a fair idea between Rohit and myself and the selectors and the management," Dravid had said after the 3-0 clean sweep over the West Indies.

"I don't think there's a set formula to it. But we're pretty clear about the balance and the combination (for the T20 World Cup). We are just structuring a little bit of the team around it and also balancing individual workloads as well.

"We have got a pretty fair idea of the kind of skills we're looking for in Australia, with the kind of guys who are in running. Not everything is set in stone but we want to give everyone a fair chance to stake their claim for those spots," Dravid had said.

As far as Sri Lanka are concerned, the side suffered a 1-4 defeat at the hands of Australia and was let down by batting time and again.

Skipper Dasun Shanaka would hope that their batting gets its act together against India.

The bowling will need to recover fast as star leg-spinner Wanindu Hasaranga has been ruled out of the series after failing to recover from

Suryakumar ruled out of Sri Lanka T20Is

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

In-form India batter Suryakumar Yadav was on Wednesday ruled out of the three-match T20 International series against Sri Lanka owing to a hairline fracture on his hand. The series starts here on Thursday and Yadav's injury was confirmed to PTI by a BCCI source before the Board issued an official statement.

Yadav, who was adjudged Player of the Series in the preceding T20Is against the West Indies, is the second Indian player to be forced out of the Sri Lanka series after pacer Deepak Chahar.

Chahar was ruled out of the games in Lucknow and Dharamsala after picking up a hamstring injury.

"Deepak sustained a right quadriceps injury during bowling

his COVID-19 infection.

Teams

India: Rohit Sharma (Captain), Ruturaj Gaikwad, Shreyas Iyer, Sanju Samson, Ishan Kishan (wicket-keeper), Venkatesh Iyer, Deepak Hooda, Ravindra Jadeja, Yuzvendra Chahal, Ravi Bishnoi, Kuldeep Yadav, Mohd. Siraj, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Harshal Patel, Jasprit Bumrah (vice-captain), Avesh Khan.

while Suryakumar suffered a hairline fracture during a fielding attempt in the third and final T20I against the West Indies in Kolkata on Sunday," BCCI secretary Jay Shah said in the statement.

"They will now head to the National Cricket Academy in Bengaluru for further management of their injuries," he added.

Sri Lanka all-rounder Wanindu Hasaranga will miss the upcoming T20I series against India after testing positive for COVID-19.

"Wanindu Hasaranga, who was in isolation after contracting COVID-19, has once again, returned a positive result when a Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) was conducted on the player yesterday (February 22). A PCR test too confirmed the result," SLC said in an official statement.

Sri Lanka: Dasun Shanaka (Captain), Pathum Nissanka, Kusal Mendis, Charith Asalanka (Vice-Captain), Dinesh Chandimal, Danushka Gunathilaka, Kamil Mishara, Janith Liyanage, Chamika Karunaratne, Dushmantha Chameera, Lahiru Kumara, Binura Fernando, Shiran Fernando, Maheesh Theekshana, Jeffrey Vandersay, Praveen Jayawickrama, Ashian Daniel.

Every Test match is important because of the WTC points: Mayank Agarwal

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

After a splendid performance with the bat against New Zealand and South Africa, Mayank Agarwal was named in the 18-man squad for the upcoming Test series against Sri Lanka.

Speaking ahead of the first Test, which begins from March 4 at the Punjab Cricket Association IS Bindra Stadium, Mohali, Mayank Agarwal highlighted the importance of the series and explained why the team's mentality is to win every Test match.

"I am very excited to be part of the squad and part of the Indian Test team. I am really looking forward to contributing to the team's success," Mayank said.

"Every Test series is of utmost importance because of the World Test Championship. Each Test carries points. The collective thinking of our team is to pick up a win in every match that we play and try to get the maximum points we can from all the Test matches," the 31-year-

old added. Mayank went on to explain why he enjoys opening the batting, but also added that he is open to bat lower down the order, if and when the team requires him to do so.

"The role of an opener is key in Test cricket because, in a five-day game, it is the openers who set up the day for the batters to follow. It's something that I have done all my life. I really enjoy doing that. With that being said, I don't just always want to open the batting. I am also comfortable batting at any position the team wants me to bat, at any given situation," Mayank said.

Sri Lanka, over the past couple of decades, have garnered a reputation of possessing a solid spin-bowling attack, especially in the longest format.



New captain Rohit happy to groom India's future leaders

AP ■ LUCKNOW

Rohit Sharma on Wednesday said he was happy to help train possible successors following his recent appointment as India's cricket captain across all formats in place of Virat Kohli.

The star batsman was named Test captain on Saturday -- he was already white-ball skipper -- but since he will turn 35 in April pundits do not expect his tenure to be a long one.

India's cricket board has identified three possible candidates all in their 20s to follow him eventually -- Jasprit Bumrah, KL Rahul and Rishabh Pant.

"I won't have that much of a role of telling them each and everything, obviously they are all mature cricketers but someone



needs to be around them to help and guide them in difficult situations and (I am) more than happy to do that," Rohit told his first press conference after taking over the Test job. "We were groomed by

someone else, so it's a natural process. If you talk of Bumrah, KL, Pant, they have a big role to play in India's success at the same time they are looked upon as leaders as well."

PTI ■ QUEENSTOWN

India will be desperate to gain some momentum heading into the World Cup but for that, their bowlers will have to raise their game as they seek to stop New Zealand from completing a 5-0 whitewash in the fifth women's ODI here on Thursday.

Having lost all matches played here so far, including the lone T20I, the Mithali Raj-led side is finding it difficult to stem the rot and faces the ignominy of a one-sided series defeat days ahead of the World Cup.

The series defeat is India's fourth in the last one year, having lost to South Africa, England and Australia earlier.

While the batters did raise their game in the second and third ODIs with a much-improved performance, the bowling unit has let the team down throughout the series, something that Mithali admitted was a concern heading into the World Cup.

"Definitely we have been trying a

few combinations with the seam and spin attack. Bowling attack is a concern going into the World Cup," Mithali said.

"We are adapting to the conditions and to the open ground and the breeze. We have not been very consistent in our bowling spells."

The Indian team hasn't performed as a cohesive unit. While the bowlers failed to defend 270 plus targets in two games, the batters were unable to chase 276 and 192 in 20 overs in the fourth ODI. The fielding has also been sub-standard.

With as many as three players in extended Managed Isolation and Quarantine (MIQ) for the first half of the tour, India continued to experiment with their line up.

With pressure building up on Harmanpreet Kaur, who has managed just 33 runs in the three ODIs and was also expensive with the ball, the visitors left out the vice-captain



from the playing XI in the fourth ODI.

Shafali Verma is also yet to fire. The youngster has only struck one fifty in the series and was out on nought in the last game.

The spin department, save Deepti Sharma, has been inconsistent while the pace attack has lacked teeth to trouble the opposition batters. Overall, the Indian bowlers have struggled to adapt to the con-

India look to avoid whitewash

ditions.

The positives for India include teenage wicketkeeper Richa Ghosh's good form. The 18-year-old scored back-to-back half centuries in the second and fourth ODI and is India's second highest run-getter in the tournament behind Mithali.

With Richa and the reliable Taniya Bhatia, India have two solid wicketkeeping options heading into the World Cup.

In the absence of Smriti Mandhana, who missed the one-off T20 and three ODIs because of extended MIQ, Sabbhineni Meghana performed well at the top. Deepti is the series' leading wicket-taker with eight scalps, while veteran pacer Jhulan Goswami (5), who has played only two games, also figures in the top four.

With the World Cup around the corner and just two warm-up matches against South Africa and

the West Indies after the game on Thursday, India will badly need some momentum heading into the marquee event.

New Zealand, on the other hand, will be delighted with how the series has panned out.

Their top batters have been impressive, with Amelia Kerr and Suzie Bates hitting a hundred each while Amy Satterthwaite has scored two fifties.

The lower-order has also shown it can finish games, snatching victory from the jaws of defeat in the third ODI.



Kiwis eye historic victory in 2nd SA Test



AP ■ CHRISTCHURCH

New Zealand go into the second Test against South Africa on Friday on the cusp of clinching the series and reclaiming the mantle of number one in the world.

A draw in Christchurch would give New Zealand a historic first series win against South Africa in 17 attempts, while victory would not only complete a 2-0 series sweep but it would see them dis-

lodge Australia at the top of the world rankings.

The notorious bowl-first green wicket at Hagley Oval has been a happy hunting ground for New Zealand with eight wins from 10 Tests

But Kyle Jamieson -- who has taken 24 wickets in four Tests at the ground -- said winning the toss was not necessarily an advantage.

"When we've batted first we've been able to see through tough

periods and come outside the other side, so while it's a bit important I don't think it necessarily determines the outcome," he said.

New Zealand won the toss in the first Test and rolled South Africa for 95 and 111, while scoring 482 in their one turn at bat.

While they downplayed the importance of the toss, Henry Nicholls, who scored 105 in New Zealand's colossal innings-and-276-run victory, said familiarity

with the ground was important. "From a batting point of view, we know it's tough but when you have that experience that's the perk of having home advantage," he said.

New Zealand have maintained the same squad for the second Test which meant no room for Trent Boult, who missed the first Test for the birth of his third child, and provided another opportunity for Matt Henry.

Henry produced the third-best bowling figures in New Zealand Test history with seven for 23 in the first innings, took two more in the second innings and hit an unbeaten 58 with the bat.

Rather than hang their heads after the first Test, South Africa have wound back the clock to their New Year series against India where they lost the first Test and bounced back to win the remaining two.

"It's about reminding the guys that as a team, we've overcome a lot," said Temba Bavuma.

"We know how it is to come back, how it is to come from behind when our backs are against the wall. We do have what it takes from a character perspective to do what we need to do."

Afif, Mehidy help B'desh sink Afghanistan



AP ■ CHITTAGONG

Afif Hossain and Mehidy Hasan shared a record 174-run seventh-wicket stand as Bangladesh recovered from a top-order collapse to beat Afghanistan by four wickets in the first one-day international of a three-

match series in Chittagong on Wednesday.

Afif hit an unbeaten 93 off 115 balls while Mehidy added 81 not out, helping Bangladesh reach 219-6 in 48.5 overs, after Afghanistan left-arm pace bowler Fazalhaq Farooqi's opening-spell burst reduced the hosts to 18-4

inside five overs.

Spinners Mujeeb Ur Rahman and Rashid Khan took one wicket apiece to leave Bangladesh struggling at 45-6 before Afif and Mehidy turned the tide.

Earlier Mustafizur Rahman took 3-35 with Shoriful Islam (2-38), Shakib Al Hasan (2-50) and Taskin Ahmed (2-55) all making an impact as Bangladesh bowled out Afghanistan for 215 runs.

Despite the modest target, Bangladesh were in all sorts of trouble when Farooqi dismissed openers Tamim Iqbal (eight) and Liton Das (one) in the third over before nabbing Mushfiqur Rahim (three) and debutant Yasir Ali (zero) in the next.

Things turned worse for Bangladesh after Shakib Al Hasan dragged onto his stumps off Mujeeb Ur Rahman to depart for 10 and Rashid dismissed Mahmudullah for eight to leave Bangladesh in a precarious situation.

But Afif, who hit 11 fours and a six in his career-best knock, and Mehidy ensured there was no further damage.

Mehidy struck nine fours in his third ODI fifty, also his personal best innings, which came off 120 balls.

Their partnership surpassed Imrul Kayes and Mohammad Saifuddin's 127 seventh-wicket record for Bangladesh, set against Zimbabwe in 2018.